THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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Disaster Rapid Action Force personnel loading rescue equipment on to a vehicle ahead of Yaas' landfall in Odisha | BISWANATH SWAIN

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YAAS' LIKELY LANDFALL NEAR BALASORE ON WEDNESDAY

It is expected to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm on the east coast, where most of the oxygen plants are located

MAY TRIGGER HEAVY RAINS, STORM SURGE

The storm would generate speeds up to 165 kmph, gusting to 185 kmph, besides triggering storm surge on the coasts of Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Bhadrak in Odisha. Heavy rainfall predicted in parts of West Bengal, including Kolkata. In a review meeting, home minister Amit Shah assured all help to CMs of West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh

AIRPORTS, PORTS ON HIGH ALERT

- Odisha airports are on high alert even as the Kolkata Port has decided to suspend all shipping movements from Tuesday
- The Paradip Port Trust has directed all vessels to pick up anchors and move to sea; massive evacuation works underway in Odisha
- Medicine, oxygen stocks replenished to ensure Covid treatment

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NDRF TEAMS DEPLOYED TO CARRY OUT RESCUE AND RELIEF WORKS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Delhi Police at Twitter's doorstep

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

DAYS after Twitter tagged a tweet by BJP leader Sambit Patra — alleging the Congress had drafted a toolkit to malign the Centre's image — as 'manipulated media', the Delhi Police Special Cell on Monday landed at the social media giant's offices in search of the 'right person' to serve a notice.

Calling it a routine process, and not a raid, Delhi Police spokesperson DCP Chenmoy Biswal said they had to visit Twitter's offices at Lado Sarai and Gurugram Golf Course Road as the reply from the company's MD, India operations, M Maheshwari was 'ambiguous'.

The special cell had issued a notice on Maheshwari on May 21, asking him to appear before it with information on why the platform tagged Sambit's tweet as 'manipulated media'. "It appears that Twitter has information, which is not known to us, on the basis of which they classified it as such. The special cell wants to find out the truth. Twitter, which claimed to know the underlying truth, should clarify," he added. On May 18, Sambit Patra and other BJP leaders posted the screenshots of an alleged 'toolkit' and accused the Congress of creating it to malign the Centre's pandemic management. The Congress had responded by writing to Twitter, asking it to suspend Patra's account for posting a "forged toolkit".

HALO, BENGALURU!

It was a relief from the heavens, literally. For Bengalureans, stuck at home because of the Covid lockdown and depressed over rising numbers of infections and deaths, it was a bright sunny morning that greeted them on Monday, with a gift of big, colourful ring of rainbow around the sun. Messages with photos started flying quite early in the day, flooding people's inboxes. Pramod G Galgali, Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium, said that the celestial phenomenon is called 22 Degree Halo or simply the Sun's Halo and that it is not a rare sight | VINOD KUMAR T | P2

EXPRESS READ

FDI jumps 19 pc to $59.64 bn in 2020-21: Govt

NEW DELHI: Foreign Direct Investment into the country grew 19% to $59.64 billion during 2020-21 on account of measures taken by the government in the realms of policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business, the Commerce and Industry Ministry said on Monday. Total FDI rose 10% to the "highest ever" of $81.72 billion during 2020-21.

Walk-in jabs for 18+ at govt hosps

Centre aims to reduce wastage while giving full access to those unable to book online

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Centre on Monday allowed walk-in vaccinations at government hospitals for people in the 18–44 age group to reduce vaccine wastage. It was also an acknowledgement of the point put across by states that not all beneficiaries may have access to internet or smart phones or mobile phones to register themselves on the CoWIN portal.

The final decision on whether or not to opt for it will be taken by state governments.

While announcing the decision, the Union health ministry clarified that those choosing private hospitals for inoculation must continue booking slots via CoWIN portal or Aarogya Setu app. The decision came after several states reported vaccine wastage whenever some registered beneficiaries failed to turn up. In such cases, on-site registration of a few beneficiaries may be necessary to minimise the wastage, the health ministry said.

Advising states to exercise caution to avoid overcrowding at centres, the ministry said clear instructions must be issued to all immunisation officers that the decision of respective states on walk-in facility is strictly adhered to.

Stating that fully reserved sessions can be organised for beneficiaries belonging to facilitated cohorts (those needing assistance) category, the ministry said: "Wherever such sessions are organised, all efforts must be made to mobilise such beneficiaries in sufficient numbers."

Till Monday, only those above 45 years were allowed the benefit of walk-in jabs. By allowing on-site registration for those in the 18-44 category, the ministry aims to cut wastage and increase the number of beneficiaries. Official data reveal that only about one crore people in the 18-44 group — out of an estimated 49 crore across India — have received at least one dose since they became eligible on May 1.

NATIONWIDE	MAY 23	MAY 24
Fresh cases	2,40,842	2,22,315
Recoveries	3,55,102	3.02.544
Deaths	3,741	4,454

JAB-O-METER TAKE YOUR SHOT
May 23 **9,42,722 doses**
May 24 **23,65,395 doses**
TOTAL DOSES: 19,84,43,550

Things getting better than earlier, says CM after Covid war room visit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister B S Yediyurappa on Monday said his government is considering doling out a few more financial aid packages as part of the Rs 1,250 crore economic relief announced earlier last week.

After visiting a BBMP war room at Domlur, he said, "The shortage of oxygenated beds has lessened considerably. We are also making continuous efforts to increase ICU beds to meet the demand. At 25 Covid Care Centres in Bengaluru, 3,000 beds, including 1,000 oxygenated ones, are available. These centres have doctors, nurses, food, medicine and other essentials."

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa at the BBMP war room at Domlur in Bengaluru, which he visited on Monday | EXPRESS

Appealing to those living in slums and villages to voluntarily move to CCCs if they test Covid-positive, he said, "Since their houses are small, chances of infection spreading faster is high." He said, "I interacted with the war room staff for 45 minutes. I attended to one call and the caller wanted an ICU bed, which was arranged immediately. Things have become better."

He denied that the BJP central leadership is evaluating his ministers and their performance on the management of Covid second wave.

He was accompanied by Bengaluru Central MP PC Mohan, Deputy Chief Ministers Dr CN Ashwath Narayan and Govind Karjol, Congress MLA from Shantinagar NA Haris and BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta. P4

FROM ACROSS THE STATE

23.28% POSITIVITY RATE ON MONDAY

1,08,723 SAMPLES TESTED ON MONDAY

TOTAL VACCINATIONS **1,21,97,196**

- As part of its Covid-testing drive, the government will cover 1,500 villages a week, sending mobile testing units with medical staff to each location
- Government supplies 30 ventilators and 25 oxygen concentrators to Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences
- Shivamogga trust enables people, who cannot afford pulse oximeters, to get tested for free at neighbourhood shops

KARNATAKA	MAY 23	MAY 24
Fresh cases	25,979	25,311
Recoveries	35,573	57,333
Deaths	626	529

States trim capex, vax adds to burden

ANURADHA SHUKLA @ New Delhi

HIGH market borrowing and sharp revenue decline due to the pandemic are forcing many states to cut capital expenditure, as they are struggling to foot the cost of the vaccine amid widening fiscal deficit.

"Many states, including Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana and Odisha, are reducing capital expenditure by about 25-30%. If states have to incur the vaccine cost also, they would have to cut corners, which means lowering their capex," a senior member of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) said.

The only way to fix this is to have a centralised vaccine procurement policy, the member suggested. "State capex fall will not help the economy. Market borrowing has also cost in terms of interest burden. With GST shortfall to continue this year, this is not a good scenario. Till we are able to vaccinate all, the cost of the pandemic for the economy will continue to remain high, keeping recovery uncertain," the member said.

According to estimates, the total vaccination cost is ₹3.7 lakh crore for states at the highest vaccine price. This is large given the budgeted capital expenditure of states.

"If we map this scenario analysis with the budgeted FY22 total expenditure of 20 major states at the highest price point, the vaccine procurement is 16% of the total expenditure for Bihar and 12% for states like Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand," Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser, State Bank of India said in a recent report.

26% more market borrowing in FY21

In FY21, 28 states and 2 UTs raised a total of ₹7.98 lakh crore via market borrowings, 26% higher than the borrowings of ₹6.35 lakh crore in FY20

An analysis of the states' finances suggests that since this year, too, they may have to borrow, they are cautious in raising money from the market. Also the increase in proceeds from cesses and surcharges from 3% of gross tax revenue in 2000-01 to 23.5% in 2020-21 has reduced the divisible pool and brought down the effective devolution share to about 30% of gross tax revenue.

STIR AMID PANDEMIC

Farmers stage a protest against the Haryana government after the police booked over 300 of them in connection with a clash earlier this month, in Hisar on Monday. The protest was later called off | PTI | P8

Technical snag hits 2 oxygen plants in Ballari, supplies to go down by 20 pc

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

REPAIR and maintenance works after technical snags hit two oxygen producing plants in Ballari led to Karnataka's nodal officer for oxygen Munish Moudgil sounding an alert that supplies would be hit by 20 per cent over the next two days. It set off alarm bells on the shortage affecting the lives of Covid patients depending on oxygen.

Moudgil announced, "There is a crisis, as 220 metric tonnes (MT) of oxygen supply from Ballari has been reduced due to production problems and would be stabilised by Wednesday morning. So for the next two days, there will be a 20 per cent reduction in supply to all districts."

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta said hospitals have been told to make necessary arrangements. The oxygen supply, however, will not be stopped completely, Moudgil added.

Another senior BBMP official said hospitals have also been told to take in lesser numbers of critical patients and to keep sufficient buffer stocks of oxygen. The state gets 1,000 MT of oxygen daily, of which around 810 MT is locally manufactured and supplied. Of this 810 MT, around 340 MT is supplied to Bengaluru.

The two units of Praxiar and Air Waters generate 260MT.

CONTINUED ON: P4

3 ON SHORTLIST TO HEAD CBI; CONG SORE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

A meeting of a high-powered committee comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana and Leader of Opposition Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Monday to pick the new chief of the CBI saw the latter raising objections over the selection process.

"The way the procedure was followed, it was in conflict of the mandate of the committee. On May 11, I was given 109 names... and today by 1 pm, 10 names were shortlisted while by 4 pm, six names were shortlisted. This casual approach of the department of personnel and training is highly objectionable," Chowdhury's dissent note said.

According to sources, the names of senior IPS officers H C Awasthi, K R Chandra and V S K Kaumudi have been shortlisted for the job. Awasthi (1985, UP cadre) is the current DGP of UP; Kaumudi (1984, Andhra Pradesh cadre) is a special secretary

in the Ministry of Home Affairs; and Chandra (1985, Bihar cadre) is the current Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal.

The meeting was held after a delay of around four months despite former CBI chief R K Shukla retiring on February 3. The agency is currently helmed by interim chief Pradeep Sinha.

Easy tools to manage the virus at the district level

M S SESHADRI, T JACOB JOHN AND MURU SUBRAMANI

FOUR peaks characterise the second wave of India's Covid epidemic — momentum peak (21.4.21), numerical peak of new cases two weeks later (6.5.21); acceleration peak of mortality (28.4.21) and numerical mortality peak three weeks later (18.5.21). Each state and district has these four peaks.

Yet, the dynamics of onset, tempo and peak are asynchronous even among districts of the same state. While many districts are in post-peak decline of the momentum, in others momentum is still accelerating. Every district should be able to look for the four peaks in their 'local epidemic curves' and take appropriate individualised district-level action.

To facilitate this, a set of easy-to-use Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets for health administrators are available for download from https:/tiny.cc/covid-momentum. At a glance you can discern epidemic momentum and mortality acceleration, district-wise. How does this help? 'Social vaccine' and biological vaccine should be top priority in districts with rapid epidemic momentum. Short district level lockdown may be needed to buy time.

Post-peak decline in momentum indicates a substantial level of herd immunity; the proportion of vulnerable is low, manpower shortage and potential crowding at vaccination centres will argue against large vaccination drives. However, imminent mortality acceleration necessitates quick increase in hospital and critical-care beds, oxygen supply and essential drugs.

Districts with mortality curve deceleration should anticipate decreased demands for oxygen and essential drugs, and prepare to move surplus supplies to needy neighbours.

Such streamlined and science-based approach will optimise use of scant resources to manage the epidemic, reduce new infections and lower Covid mortality.

Full article: newindianexpress.com

Blind belief: Covid gallops in Gokak village on a dead horse!

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

NO horsing around, take Covid precautions seriously, the government keeps reminding people. But at Konnur village in Gokak taluk, hundreds of people gathered to bid a final farewell to a "divine horse" that died on Sunday.

Ironically, the horse was expected to rid the village of Covid, but its funeral turned into a superspreader event with people gathering in large numbers and ignoring all Covid-related norms. The authorities have now sealed central part of the village and booked a case against 15 people for taking out a funeral procession.

The villagers had on Wednesday night let the horse go around the village on the instructions of Pawadeswar seer of Maradimath in Konnur village of Gokak taluk, believing that it had the powers to drive Covid away from the village. The only condition was that none of the villagers should see the animal at night.

It is a common myth in the village that such godly horses have earlier saved villagers from malaria, cholera and

plague contagions decades ago. A similar horse march had been done during the Covid first wave too.

The Maradimath seer and the villagers held a meeting recently and decided to follow the same old tradition. After the event, the villagers were told to pray at Kadasiddeshwara temple for five Mondays and Fridays if they want to see the end of Covid.

CONTINUED ON: P5

ALMANAC TODAY
Tuesday: 25/05/2021 • Year: Plava • Ayana: Uttharayana
Ritu: Vasantha • Masa: Vaishala • Paksha: Shukla • Tithi: Chaturdashi 7.38 pm
Nakshatra: Vishaka 4.12 am • Moon in Vrischika Rashi • Rahukaala: 03:00 am to 04:30 am
Gulikakala: 12:00 pm to 01:30 pm • Yamaganda: 09:00 am to 10:30 am

WEATHER
MIN 22°C | MAX 28°C
FORECAST
Showers late. Overcast

Sunrise 5.52 am
Sunset 6.40 pm
Moonrise 5.38 pm
Moonset 4.39 am

HALO DROPS AROUND SUN MESMERISES CITY

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

"HEY! Have you noticed the halo around the sun?!" This was the most common message Bengalureans shared with each other around noon, a welcome distraction for Monday morning lockdown blues. While some saw a dark circle around the sun, others saw a rainbow encircling the star, and mobiles flashed copiously, capturing the phenomenon for eternity.

In some places, a clear sky made the halo a delight to shoot, while in others, wispy clouds added a new dimension. Experts and citizens were amazed at the variety of photographs coming in from different locations.

Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium director Pramod Galgali told TNIE that the 22 Degree Halo, or simply the Sun's Halo, is not a rare sight, and that they were just observing it.

Explaining its formation, he said, "Putting it simply, when thin clouds form around a bright object like the Sun or Moon, a halo-like structure is seen. It is dimmer around the Moon."

On why it is called a 22 Degree Halo, he said it is because the halo is formed at a 22 degree angle from the horizon (where the horizon is a zero-degree angle and zenith a 90-degree angle). He said there are water crystals in the atmosphere, which are nothing but thin clouds, so when light passes through them, it is reflected in different colours, creating the halo effect.

Officials at the planetarium said the formation of such halos is usual during the monsoon or pre-monsoon period, when the sun is bright, sky is clear and there are ice crystals in the atmosphere. "Visibility is different in different locations," the officials explained.

The statue of Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna looks majestic against the sun's halo on Monday | SHRIRAM BN

BBMP earns ire for testing people forcibly

BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta says an inquiry ordered into the incident

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CITIZENS were furious on Monday after they saw a viral video of a boy forcibly being taken for testing and then being assaulted by BBMP staffers and contract employees in the Dharmarayaswamy temple ward in Nagarathpet.

In the video, two boys are seen being forcefully asked to give samples, while being brutally assaulted. While one fled, the other couldn't. The video was shot by someone in the opposite building. The video showed the boy being beaten up and having his arm twisted, while being forced to give his sample. Though people nearby pleaded, the staffers refused to let him go..

Citizens shared many such videos from the same area on Monday with TNIE.

Another victim, not wanting to be named, told TNIE, "I was walking by a temporary testing booth to get a taxi for my parents. However, the BBMP men caught me and hit me in front of my parents, forcing me to give samples. I kept pleading that I had no symptoms and that I was here for the taxi. When they saw the taxi they let me go. After my parents boarded the ride, they caught me again and forcefully took my samples."

In another video, a man standing on the road opposite his house was beaten and dragged to a temporary testing centre.

The incident of the boy being forced happened around 11am and after it went viral, BBMP South Zone officials visited the makeshift centre on Dasappa Road and closed it down.

Dr Shivakumar, BBMP South Zone Health Officer, said, "The man gave the wrong OTP at the time of sample collection and also abused the staffers. He refused to give his samples. When he started hitting, the staffers retaliated."

Cops file suo motu action against BBMP

The Halasuru Gate police filed a suo motu case against BBMP and started a probe. The police said, "BBMP officials from Dasappa hospital conduct tests on Nagarathpet Main Road every day. On Monday, one Kishan mistook it for a vaccination drive and registered. When the OTP was generated, he realised it was for a test and refused to take it. He was assaulted by BBMP booth-level officer."

EXPRESS READ

Labs fined for delaying test reports

Laboratories have been fined a sum of Rs 20,20,600 for the delay in uploading results of Covid-19 tests. According to the State Covid Task Force, the total number of cases where results are found to be delayed for more than 24 hours since May 8, is 10,103, and this includes both government labs and private labs. About nine government labs and 31 private labs were penalised. Out of these, 3,034 cases belong to government labs and the remaining 7,069 cases are from private labs. They have been fined Rs 200 for each case.

Meet demands before reopening: Pvt schools

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

PRIVATE schools want the Karnataka government to meet their demands in order to comply with the scheduled reopening of institutions on June 15.

The KPMTCC (Karnataka Private School Managements, Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff Coordination Committee) held a meeting with stakeholders and came up with the decision.

Shashi Kumar, convener of KPMTCC, said it does not make sense for schools to open with thin admissions. State board schools have received barely two per cent admissions, and said if the lockdown is to be lifted on June 7 and schools are to open by June 15, parents will not have time to pay fees.

The association batted for a government order to make admissions compulsory for the next academic year. The government's 'mass pass' decision to allow students of Class 1 to 9 to graduate to the next grade without examinations was counterproductive, the association stated.

"Parents who paid fees last year are now hesitant, as others were allowed to get promoted without attending classes or paying fees," added Kumar.

Kumar also said that teachers have still not been given a portal to register for vaccination. The association demanded that teaching and non-teaching staff be vaccinated and be given a financial package of minimum Rs 10,000.

'Data breach in department portal'

The association members claimed that data has been leaked about the profile of schools from the government's Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) plus a platform on which they update information about the school.

"Even as the CPI has given clear instructions that we can update our data on the portal post the lockdown, local BEOs have been pressuring schools to upload information," said Shashi Kumar.

"This is like a breach of personal data of my house," he said, adding that it's a legal offence under the IT Act. He termed as "deliberate" the act of CRPs and BEOs giving away passwords.

Gomala land for jumbo corridor inspected

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

TO reduce man-elephant conflict and strengthen the jumbo corridor along Bannerghatta National Park, Bengaluru Urban Deputy Commissioner J Manjunath, along with his team, inspected gomala and revenue lands in Anekal and Jigani.

He undertook the inspection drive on the request of the forest department to strengthen the corridor.

DC J Manjunath inspects gomal land for elephant corridor | EXPRESS

"The habitation needs to be identified. There is revenue land, gomala land, encroachments and habitations, which are being noted. The report will then be prepared and submitted to the government for final decision," Manjunath told Express.

He added that in some cases, land has been granted by the government to people and some are vacant, which need to be verified with records.

Earlier on May 20, he had conducted a field visit and had interacted with the locals and tribals of Hakki Pikki colony to take stock of ground reality.

Women marshals bring caring touch to CCCs

There were many proposals from NCC women cadets to be deputed on ground. With cases on the rise and staff shortage, it was decided to try out women marshals

Government official

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

25-year-old Bhavani K G rides up from a village 5 km from Hoskote every morning to reach Mahadevapura CCC before 6am. She is one of the 12 women on the first 'lady marshal' batch, deputed in Bengaluru.

A BA graduate and NCC C-certificate holder, Bhavani quit her job in a software firm after she was selected as a frontline warrior. "I joined a week ago. I applied as I wanted to help and we were taught during training that 'service is our motto'. At the CCC, my job is to take details of patients, check their symptoms, comfort them, escalate the case based on patient's condition to the doctor and nurse," she proudly told TNIE.

BBMP and the health department have been recruiting women marshals on trial basis and have stationed them at select maternity homes, CCCs, triaging and stabilisation centres.

"Earlier, we were reluctant because of odd working hours and lack of women-friendly facilities," said a government official.

Jothika Purushotam stands aggressive and bold at Shanthinagar Maternity Home. None entering the centre is left unattended. There are 200 ward marshals and 66 new recruits under BBMP. BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta said that women as marshals are welcome, but so far, they have not been confirmed.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

25th May: I was recently asked whether belief in astrology makes people behave better. The answer was, well, yes and no! Astrology in itself doesn't change people's behaviour, but a lot of astrologers believe that if they don't behave properly today, cosmic law will catch them out tomorrow!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Everything hinges around your ability to do business. To follow the money metaphor through, you'll also be counting the cost of an emotional entanglement. But whether the price is worth paying is something only you can decide. Ultimately your decision must be based as much on what partners need as on what you want.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Partners won't have everything their own way; in spite of appearances they never really do. But they do seem to hold the key, and there are times when they speak, you have to jump. Or, of course, you can always go into one of your famous obstinate moods - and completely ignore them!

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
The days pass, your emotions change, and it seems that today you'll be even more emotional. A chance, perhaps, for you to get in touch with all those deep feelings you've bottled up for too long. Domestic circumstances are changing, and I hope that by this time next week the stress level will have dipped noticeably.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You're such a worrier. But then you know that already. After all, that's one of the building blocks of your astrological character. Just at the moment I'd say that what you have to do now is sort out which of your doubts is genuine, and which is no more than a mirage in your mind.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Your weekly horoscope is one of diversity and choice, so you can pick your own direction, and devise your personal strategy. Yet, your daily chart raises intense emotions, and puts the focus firmly on home affairs and family relationships. Tackle domestic issues and it looks as if other blockages will then begin to shift.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
You're coming to the end of a six-month period of planetary stress. It's been slightly different for each one of you, for no Virgo is exactly the same as any other. That's obvious! But what you share is your tendency to worry about nothing - but that's about to change. You'll soon wonder what you were ever concerned about!

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
It's time to move on. You may have got the feeling that life would never change, that the same people would be around for ever, or that the future was set in stone. If so, you forgot the fundamental law of the astrological universe - that all things must pass. And that's precisely why you can now make a fresh start.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You're in a strong position today. Sure, you could be a little emotional but, as long as you direct your feelings in a positive direction, you'll be able to spread your share of love and light. Funnily enough, today's planets also favour everyone messing about on boats.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
You're bound to be slightly uncertain, but then I think that's precisely why you're in such a powerful position; inconsistency can be a virtue! You'll be able to make the most of mysterious developments, especially ones which come loaded with deep significance and symbolic meaning! Don't rush it, though.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Your social stars are highlighted, but it could be family members who make the best friends. Don't forget those friends who actually feel like they're part of the family! Watch out for floating legal problems or moral minefields, as the last thing you want now is to be embroiled in a messy dispute. Keep your nose clean!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Professional Aquarians should be on good form. Astrologers often talk about your idealism, but they rarely mention that your work, or community activities, provide one of the most powerful areas for you to do your bit to make a better world and heal the wounds which divide people. But that is what is noticeable about your chart at the moment.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Sometimes you're happy with the relatio-nships you have. But at other times you dream of the perfect romantic bliss - and such a time is now. The outcome depends on whether you are prepared to take other people with you, or whether you want to wander off in search of pastures new. A plus for today is the quality of your financial acumen.

THE PHANTOM

"THERE'S SOMETHING YET TO DISCOVER"
WHY ELSE DOES MY MIND KEEP RETURNING TO TOWNS ELLERBEE?
SO WHAT IF HE WAS JOHN XII? IT'S NO CONCERN OF MINE!
UNLESS...?
"THERE HAS TO BE!"

HI AND LOIS

DO YOU BELIEVE IN EXTRATERRESTRIALS?
WHY NOT? THERE ARE BILLIONS OF GALAXIES WITH BILLIONS OF STARS AND PLANETS. THERE COULD BE TRILLIONS OF BEINGS ON THEM.
SUDDENLY THE UNIVERSE SEEMS CROWDED.

BEETLE BAILEY

BLONDIE

WHY DID MY PROPERTY TAXES GO UP?
WELL, YOU MADE HOME IMPROVEMENTS THIS PAST YEAR
SO WE HAD TO RAISE YOUR TAXES
HEY, KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!
PROPERTY APPRAISER
PROPERTY APPRAISER

LOCKHORNS

DENNIS THE MENACE

SUDOKU

Medium: Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

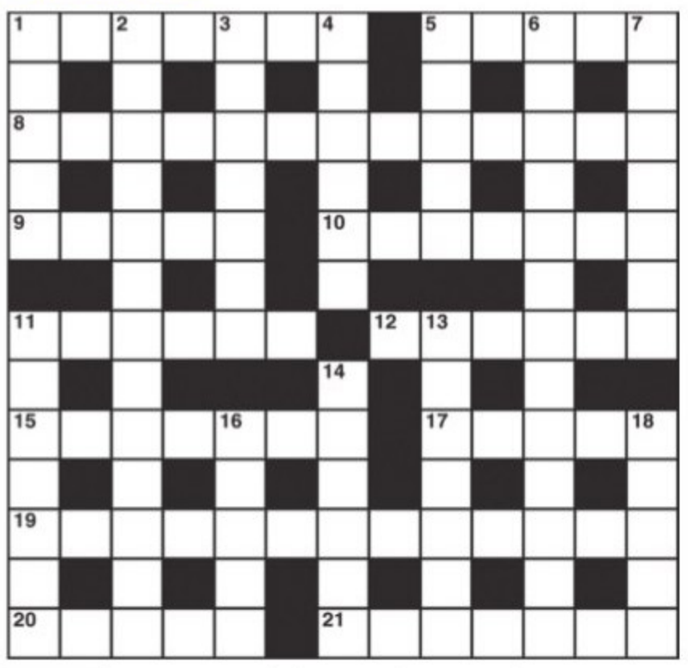
Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

			8		1			5
8			9	2			1	
4			5	6		2		
1				8		3		
	7						5	
		6		5				4
		1		7	5			6
	4			1	9			8
5			2		8			

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

8	4	7	5	3	1	6	2	9
3	1	6	2	7	9	4	8	5
2	9	5	4	6	8	3	7	1
9	8	3	7	1	5	2	6	4
5	2	1	6	4	3	7	9	8
6	7	4	8	9	2	1	5	3
4	5	9	1	2	7	8	3	6
1	3	2	9	8	6	5	4	7
7	6	8	3	5	4	9	1	2

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Disease makes Jack low (7)
5 Taunts from US troops about to be fallen in (5)
8 Release after a confession without a charge (9,4)
9 Business deal (5)
10 Different ships an armada consisted of (7)
11 Eat lightly say (6)
12 Mixes up a signal and gets into a row (6)
15 Monotonous droning noise reaches the hearer (7)
17 It is proper arias are included in this (5)
19 A grave charge? (4-9)
20 A claw that can pick up a pound in weight (5)
21 They may commemorate different battles (7)

DOWN

1 Inclined to speak fast (5)
2 An honour that has to be fought for (8,5)
3 Court cards? (7)
4 My wish is for something fancy (6)
5 Sail Columbus raised here (5)
6 Great ambition of the pyromaniac (7,6)
7 Observes the intrusion and is furious (7)
11 Settle how a monk may live (7)
13 Pride in its arrival is no sin for the parents (4,3)
14 Communicate devilish skill (6)
16 Rinse out an adhesive (5)
18 In a way age is some protection (5)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Hanoi, 8 Somebody, 9 Jiffy, 10 Fiascoes, 11 Manna, 12 Ago, 16 Beheld, 17 Abacus, 18 Off, 23 Stem, 24 Overlook, 25 Bingo, 26 Artistry, 27 Skate.

Down: 2 Animated, 3 Offender, 4 Losing, 5 Sense, 6 Yo-yos, 7 Gypsy, 12 Ado, 13 Oaf, 14 Hat trick, 15 Outright, 19 Floors, 20 Total, 21 Death, 22 Close.

JUMBLE By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HTHCI
INONO
YPSLPU
TERARH

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

ANSWERS TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S: **Jumbles:**
DOGMA VISOR SEASON INVEST
ANSWER: The car dealer just got the latest model, and people were taking test drives – INDROVES

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The TVS Motor Company on Monday donated five oxygen concentrators, each of 10-litre capacity, to Bangalore Metro MD Rakesh Singh, a press release said. They will be utilised at the Covid Care Centre of BMRCL, which has 80 staff and labourers admitted as patients, it added

Will act against those violating norms: Bommai

1,496 vehicles seized in state capital on Monday; 63 cases booked against shops for breaking lockdown rules

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AS the second phase of the 14-day lockdown to contain the Covid-19 spread in the state started from Monday, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that strict action will be taken against those violating the norms. He also warned of stern action against those involved in black-marketing of Covid vaccines.

"Police will enforce lockdown norms strictly, register cases against those violating the guidelines and even seize their vehicles, if people come out of their homes unnecessarily," Bommai told media persons in Bengaluru on Monday.

A motorcyclist argues with a traffic policeman during the lockdown in Mysuru on Monday | UDAYSHANKARS

"In some districts, complete lockdown has been announced for three to four days and directions have been issued to enforce it strictly. I have also instructed them to enforce the lockdown more strictly in cities, towns and district headquarters. Roads will be barricaded and some roads will be made into one-ways," he said.

Meanwhile, as part of lockdown enforcement, the city police on Monday seized 1,496 vehicles and booked 63 cases under NDMA act. The police also booked 63 cases against the owners of shops and commercial establishments for operating during lockdown.

On Airport Road near Hunasamaranahallli Gate, police seized vehicles after giving roses to motorists violating lockdown rules, besides appealing to them not to come out on roads unnecessarily, a senior police officer said.

'Black marketeers to face music'

Bommai warned of strict action against those involved in selling Covid vaccines on the black market. "Each vial can be used to vaccinate 10 to 11 people. Proper accountability is required to ensure there is no wastage or misuse. If anyone is found to be involved in selling it for a higher price, cases will be registered and action will be taken," the minister said, appealing to people to inform the authorities if they come across anyone involved in selling vaccines in the black market.

Bommai said action will be taken against the illegal storage, transport or sale of the vaccine. Police are investigating a case of alleged misuse of vaccine by a hospital staffers in the city.

> **Police will enforce lockdown norms strictly, register cases against those violating the guidelines and even seize their vehicles, if people come out of their homes unnecessarily**
>
> Basavaraj Bommai, Home Minister

JDS supremo and former PM H D Deve Gowda and wife Chennamma celebrate their 67th wedding anniversary by planting coconut saplings at their son and former CM H D Kumaraswamy's farm in Ramanagara district on Monday | EXPRESS

Cente was focusing on polls, not Covid: Gowda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

FORMER Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda alleged that initially, the Union government was focused more on elections in five states this year, and not on Covid cases. "They were focusing more on winning elections and not prevention of Covid," he said.

Gowda, who visited the JDS office in Monday after many days, told reporters, "Covid cases are out of control. Black and white fungus cases are also being reported. I have not seen such diseases in my life," he said. Gowda is 88 years old.

He said he had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, giving suggestions, a few of which were implemented. "Many people say Modi managed the first wave well. In Karnataka, I am not saying that all is not well. However, the Union government was more focused on state elections. There is an allegation that the Central government is according stepmotherly treatment to the state in distributing oxygen and other facilities. This should be taken care of."

He demanded stringent action against those who are hoarding and black marketing Remdesivir.

KEEPING WATCH

Tell me if pvt hosps charge more for Covid care: DKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

STATE Congress president **D K Shivakumar** on Monday accused some private hospitals of violating the Supreme Court guidelines by overcharging Covid patients.

Shivakumar appealed to people to notify him through social media if private hospitals were overcharging them for Covid-related medical facilities.

"It is unfortunate that people battling Covid are also having to bear the brunt of exorbitant bills from hospitals which are violating the Supreme Courts guidelines. This has to be stopped," Shivkumar said and added that he would look into such complaints and ensure that action was taken.

"The BJP government has turned a blind eye towards the misery of people and it is a dreadful situation where hospitals are charging exorbitantly for beds, oxygen, Covid tests or ambulance facilities," he alleged.

The senior Congress leader said that people should stand by one another in this time of crisis.

"No one should have to lose a life for not being able to afford medical costs or due to negligence," he stated.

The Congress leader said it was disgraceful to see many medical institutions working with a profit motive in times like these.

Election effect: Health experts seek death audit of officers, teachers

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

WITH elections wrapped up, community health experts and politicians are now demanding a death audit, especially as deaths of hundreds of poll officers and teachers have been reported from districts where elections were held recently.

Ballari, Channapatna, Vijayapura, Bidar, Madikeri and Ramanagara, besides Maski, Basavakalyan, Belur, Theerthahalli and Gudibande, where urban body elections were held, have seen a spate of deaths. This is also the case in the recent polls to Belagavi Parliamentary seat and urban local body elections in 10 constituencies.

While some leaders claim that 130-145 of those who died in Maski and Basavakalyan are teachers, political leaders and experts are asking the government to hold a death audit and get details.

Community health expert Dr Edmond Fernandez, consultant with the UN agency Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific, said, "Ascertaining the cause of death for epidemics and pandemics become very crucial in building a responsive health system and paves the way for an informed plan for sustainable resilience among systems and communities. A white paper on death audits from every geography will help us understand how to respond for the next crisis."

KPCC working president Eshwar Khandre said hundreds must have died, because the number of cases before elections were declared was negligible, but after elections, the numbers spiked sharply in those areas.

Former CM H D Kumaraswamy tweeted on Monday, urging the government to consider the 145 teachers who had died as "corona warriors" and give their families Rs 50 lakh in compensation. He told TNIE that the figure of 145 had been put forth by the government, but if a death audit reveals more deaths, the authorities will have to consider them too for compensation.

Karnataka Election Commission CEO Sanjiv Kumar said, "We are putting together details about the number of deaths from Maski, Basavakalyan and Belagavi, and will have the details soon. We are prepared for a death audit if there is a need." exaggerated."

"We have followed all Covid protocols, we did not allow processions and meetings during the elections," State Election Commissioner Dr Basavaraj said.

EXPRESS READ

ASHA workers hold online stir to have demands met

BENGALURU: Thousands of ASHA workers, headed by the AIUTUC-affiliated Karnataka Rajya Samyuktha ASHA Karyakarteyara Sangha, took part in a statewide online protest, seeking that their demands be addressed by the authorities. Reacting to the protest, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said, "Health assistants have been renamed as officers. It has been ordered to give risk allowance of Rs 10,000 for contract medical officers, Rs 8,000 for nurses, and Rs 10,000 for Group D workers from April 1. ASHA Karyakartas are paid on the first week of every month. Already, 17 district workers have received the payment and we will complete the remaining districts in two days." ENS

JAWAHARLAL INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (JIPMER)
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(An Institution of National Importance Under Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India)

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1	Online Registration from	21-05-2021 (Friday) - 11 AM
2	On-line Registration closes on	15-06-2021 (Tuesday) - 5 PM
3	Date of Entrance Examination	02-07-2021 (Friday)

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CENTRAL BOARD OF FILM CERTIFICATION
Ministry of information and Broadcasting)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) invites proposals for **"Takeover, Hosting and Maintenance of E-CINEPRAMAAN Online Certification Application and Website, Provisioning and Maintenance of Cloud Management System, Revamping of Website, Design, Development and Maintenance of Mobile App, Providing Different Utility Tools"**

The Request for Proposal (RFP) document (in three volumes) can be downloaded from **http:cbfcindia.gov.in/** and can also be obtained from the office of CEO, Central Board of Film Certification, Films Division Complex, Phase-I Building, 24, Dr. G. Deshmukh Marg, Mumbai-400 026 during working days against non-refundable RFP Documents fees of **Rs. 10,000/-** in form of demand draft in favour of **"Pay and Accounts Officer, Films Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Mumbai"** payable at Mumbai.

The sealed bids in physical form should be submitted to the same address as mentioned above. Last date and time for submission of bids is **26th July 2021, 17:00 Hrs.**

CBFC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid without assigning any reason.

Email: ceo[dot]cbfc[at]nic[dot]in
Tel. 022-23510477

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
Central Board of Film Certification

DAVP 22208/11/0001/2122

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that my clients intend to purchase a property from Jallan Green Fields Pvt. Ltd., A company Registered under the Companies Act Corporate Identity No. U01134KA2009PTC051553. Having its Registered Office at Plot No. 8C, KIADB Industrial Area, Attibele, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore-562107 represented by it Director and Authorised Signatory Archita Agarwalla @ Archita Jallan being a residential vacant site bearing No. L-104, situated in the layout formed by the Bangalore Development Authority in Sector-VI, Hosur, Sarjapur Road, (Agara) Layout, Bangalore, now bearing BBMP khatha No. 699/104-L, Sector, H.S.R. Layout, Bangalore measuring East to West: 24.68 meters and North to South: 15.23 meters, totally admeasuring 375.87 meters and bounded on the East by: 40 Feet Road, West by: Site No. L-101, North by: Site No. L-103, South by: Site No. L-105.

That any person/s or company claiming or asserting any kind of right, interest, title or claim/s, charge/s in respect of the above mentioned property in any manner whatsoever or has any rights/claims or objection to such sale thereof in favour of my clients is called upon to notify the undersigned within 15 days from the date of issuance of this public notice along with the documentary proof of the same. That if no such written objection/claim/s or charge/s with documentary proofs is lodged with undersigned within the stipulated period mentioned above it will be construed that the schedule property is free from all claims and encumbrances and my clients will proceed to purchase the schedule property without being liable for any claim/s or charge/s put forth thereafter.

Mrs. Nandita Haldipur, Advocate
No. 17, Sharnag Apartment,
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KARNATAKA STATE POLICE
(ISO 9001:2015-Certified Recruitment Process)

RECRUITMENT TO THE POST OF POLICE CONSTABLE (CIVIL) KALYANA KARNATAKA (LOCAL) AND RESIDUAL CADRE

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for the recruitment of 3533 posts in the cadre of Police Constable (Civil) (Men & Women). Candidates can apply through Online process only. The Classification of vacancies and other conditions can be seen from the Official Website- www.recruitment.ksp.gov.in in Notification.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION AND LAST DATE FOR PAYMENT OF FEE

- Submission of Applications starts from 25.05.2021 at 10.00 AM
- Last Date for Submission of Application is on 25.06.2021 upto 6.00 PM
- Last date for payment of Fee in authorised bank / Post Office during Office hours on 28.06.2021

Fee	The candidates belonging to the General Category 2(A), 2(B), 3(A), 3(B)	Rs. 400/-
	The Candidates belonging to the SC, ST, Category-1	Rs. 200/-

Before filling-up the application, candidates are instructed to read carefully the Notification, instructions, FAQs given in the Official Website www.recruitment.ksp.gov.in.

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Carlton House, Palace Road,
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TRACKING COVID-19

SPEED AND RISE OF COVID-19 CASES IN KARNATAKA

25,311 CASES REPORTED TODAY

25,979 CASES REPORTED YESTERDAY

TALLY STANDS AT

TODAY 24,50,215

YESTERDAY 24,24,904

DEATHS

TODAY 529 | YESTERDAY 626

DISCHARGES

TODAY 57,333 | YESTERDAY 35,573

ACTIVE CASES

TODAY 4,40,435

YESTERDAY 4,72,986

POSITIVITY RATE

TODAY 8.50%

YESTERDAY 8.44%

MORTALITY RATE

TODAY 1.05%

YESTERDAY 1.04%

RECOVERY RATE

TODAY 80.97%

YESTERDAY 79.45%

The first Covid-19 case in Karnataka was reported on March 8, 2020. Since then until May 24, 2021, a total 24,50,215 cases have been reported in 1 year and 74 days...

1,21,97,196 Total doses administered in state

VACCINATION DRIVE STATUS

Number of people completing vaccination	26,28,997
Health care workers 1st dose	7,08,915
Health care workers 2nd dose	4,66,479
Frontline workers 1st dose	5,55,858
Frontline workers 2nd dose	2,02,541
Age 18-45 1st dose	2,44,236
Above 45 1st dose	80,59,190
Above 45 2nd dose	19,59,977

DISTRICT-WISE COVID CASES

LAST 24 HOURS

5,701 BENGALURU URBAN

385 BENGALURU RURAL

Bagalakot: 283	Chamarajanagar: 439	Dakshina Kannada: 721	Hassan: 1,156	Kolar: 580	Raichuru: 753	Udupi: 927
Ballari: 807	Chikkballapur: 605	Davanagere: 633	Haveri: 312	Koppal: 337	Ramanagara: 285	Uttara Kannada: 1,110
Belagavi: 747	Chikkamagaluru: 633	Dharwad: 1,058	Kalaburagi: 245	Mandya: 888	Shivamogga: 730	Vijayapura: 256
Bidar: 58	Chitradurga: 541	Gadag: 277	Kodagu: 251	Mysuru: 2,680	Tumakuru: 1,662	Yadgir: 251

'This is CM speaking': BSY takes call in war room

During visit to a centre in B'luru, he helps a citizen find ICU bed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

"Hello, Can you hear me?", "What is the problem? What do you need?", "Are you in need of an ICU bed?", "We will arrange for it immediately, will you get admitted?", "Do you have a BU number? ", "Please hold on for a minute."

These could well be the words of any staffer manning a BBMP Covid war room when worried relatives of patients call. But on Monday, the person responding to a call requesting an ICU bed was none other than Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa.

During his visit to the BBMP Covid war room in Domlur, Yediyurappa took a "hands-on approach" to a whole new level when he wore a headset and sat in one of the chairs of call centre volunteers to take a helpline call and assist a Bengalurean find a bed.

Even as the staff guided him on the process of taking down details and running a check on bed availability, Yediyurappa introduced himself to the caller and assured him of an ICU bed.

> *I took a call that came to the war room. A Covid patient needed an ICU bed and it was arranged. Things are taking a turn for the better*
>
> - BS Yediyurappa, CM

"Our officials will call you and inform. Please get admitted immediately. This is the Chief Minister speaking. I have taken down all the details you have given me. Officials will tell you where to get admitted," Yediyurappa told the caller before hanging up.

The Domlur BBMP call centre is the third such war room Yediyurappa has visited over the last few weeks. During the lockdown last year, he went on city rounds, spoke to street vendors, hawkers, pushcart vendors etc to inquire about challenges they faced. But this time around, the CM has been visiting State and BBMP war rooms.

"I took one call that came to the war room today. A Covid patient needed an ICU bed and it was arranged immediately. Things are taking a turn for the better," Yediyurappa said.

While the Chief Minister's impromptu visit and assuinisterrance to a patient's relative over phone won him appreciation on social media, many citizens also expressed how difficult it has been to find beds, especially ICU beds, for volunteer groups and citizens who weren't as lucky to connect with the CM directly.

Rise in active cases in few dists worrisome

IFFATH FATHIMA @ Bengaluru

WHILE Bengaluru's Covid-19 cases are seeing a slow decline, the active cases moving growth rate (MGR) of other districts is going upwards. Districts like Belagavi, Chitradurga, Gadag and Kolar have shown a high 7-day and 28-day MGR of positive cases.

MGR is a percentage expression of growth of the value during the period as against a percentage of value at the beginning of the period. Higher MGR indicates shorter doubling period or increase in daily average number of active Covid-19 cases, which would increase the demand for medical infrastructure and resources to reduce the number of deaths.

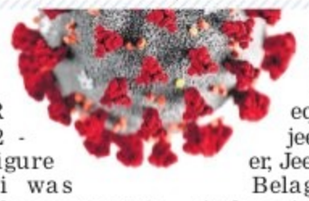
The analysis carried out by Jeevan Raksha shows that from April 21 - May 19 (28 days), Belagavi saw a 1,096% growth in MGR, followed by Chitradurga (528%), Gadags (749%) and Kolar (788%). While, in the 7-day MGR from May 12 - May 19, the figure for Belagavi was 109%, Chitradrurga (101%), Gadag and Kolar 75% each. While ideally, the 7-day MGR should be 2.5% for 7-day period and 10% for 28 days.

7-Day MGR, 28-Day MGR-Active Cases growth

- Belagavi: 109% , 1,096%
- Chitradurga: 101%, 528%
- Gadag: 75%, 749%
- Kolar: 75%, 788%

Few districts with less than 2.5% 7-Day MGR

- Kalaburagi (-54%)
- Bidar (-45%)
- Vijayapura (-33%)
- Kodagu (-31%)
- Yadgir (-26%)



"Some of the districts have completely failed to contain the spread of the virus. These are the worst performing districts in terms of containment management. There is an urgent need to review medical infrastructure and oxygen supply in these districts, and ensure it is adequately equipped," said Sanjeev Mysore, convener, Jeevan Raksha.

Belagavi district is at sixth position in the country among the districts with high active cases MGR. Belagavi district health officer Shashikant Muniyal said, "Cases are now being seen in rural areas. We are carrying out RAT on a large scale. Mild cases are sent to Covid Care Centres. We are seeing many cases along the border with Maharashtra -- mostly Athani, Raibag and Nippani. More testing is being carried out to trace Covid positives and contain the spread."

Gadag DHO Dr Satish Basarigidad said, "The cases have been on the rise for the past few weeks. However, they have been reducing in the past three days. We still need to see how the numbers progress for the next two days. We are carrying out awareness programmes to make people come forward and get tested."

However, in 'Rest of Karnataka Districts' (29 districts, excluding Bengaluru Urban), 15 districts have shown negative 7-Day MGR in the week ending May 19.

"Now, we need to move from State to district-specific lockdown and restrictions. Restrictions in any district which has a 7-Day MGR of less than 2.5% for two consecutive weeks should be relaxed, and districts having higher MGR should see more curbs," Mysore added.

WITH A HEAVY HEART

Covid-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down. Here, a devastated man in full PPE suit walks past a pile of wood after performing the last rites of his loved one who succumbed to the virus, at Chamarajpet crematorium in Bengaluru on Monday | SHRIRAM BN

'Source oxygen from other states, countries'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

But because of the snag, only 65MT of oxygen is being generated at one Praxair plant in Koppal, and one Air Water plant and the second Praxair plant in Ballari. This reduction is critical, as the State Government has been maintaining that it needs 1,700 MT. Experts and officials working with the government and manufacturing plants said all units were working at full capacity for the last six weeks and proper maintenance work could not be done, leading to the present technical snag. "It is time for the State Government to source oxygen from other states and countries. It is ideal to divide production and procurement," said an official.

10TH OXY EXPRESS REACHES K'TAKA

Bengaluru: With the 10th Oxygen Express bringing in 120 tonnes of Liquid Medical Oxygen to the State on Monday, the State now has a total of 1182.14 tonnes supplied by rail from across the country. The train from Jharkhand entered Inland Container Depot at Whitefield at 3.05 pm with 6 cryogenic containers.

Govt plans mobile units for rural areas

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

AS Covid cases are surging in rural areas, the State Government is gearing up to reach people in villages through mobile medical units. The target is to reach 1,500 villages every week.

Each district will have 15-20 vehicles and each vehicle will cover at least three villages every week. The vehicles will visit a village twice. These mobile units will travel to villages and return to district headquarters by evening. As a pilot project, the Revenue Department operated 15 vehicles in Bengaluru Rural last week. Each vehicle will have a doctor, three paramedical staff and a driver. The vehicles are equipped with steaming machines, RAT and PPE kits, oximeters, thermometers and medicines.

Revenue Minister R Ashok told *TNIE* that the department had launched *Namma Nade Halli Kade* (our step towards village), where DCs travelled to villages. But as Covid cases increased, it was stopped.

These units not only treat patients and give them medicines, but also counsel them, he said, adding that he will direct DCs to take up similar initiatives across the State. Around 2,500 PG and final-year MBBS students will be involved. "For final-year MBBS students, this will be considered as house internship and a certificate will be issued. Final-year nursing students too will get a similar certificate," he said.

TO KEEP TRACK

'Install CCTVs in hosps to ensure transparency'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

TO bring in transparency and help attendants of Covid-19 patients to see the kind of treatment being provided to their loves ones, all State-run hospitals will have to install CCTV cameras in wards and ICUs, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said after a meeting with experts on Monday.

"All Covid hospitals have been asked to install CCTV cameras to ensure transparency. This will reduce outsiders entry and it will help in controlling mucormycosis (black fungus). This will also ensure that the medical staff carry out their duties properly. Central control centre will handle the data in the districts," he said.

There have also been cases of assault on doctors and hence installation of CCTV cameras was needed, he said.

The New Indian Express had recently published an article titled— 'ICUs turning into info blackholes' — which had detailed instances of attendants not getting any information from the hospitals on the condition of the patients in ICUs.

Meanwhile, commenting on the shortage of doctors in North Karnataka, the minister said the government has recruited 1,763 doctors and general practioners to strengthen the health sector in the State.

"Notification has been issued regarding direct recruitment of 1,763 doctors, 715 experts, 75 general medicine doctors, 57 general surgeons, 145 gynecologists, 40 ENT specialists, 35 dermatologists, 142 anesthesiologists, 153 pediatricians, 17 radiologists, and 1,048 general medical practitioners are being recruited. North Karnataka is facing shortage of doctors. Gadag, Hubballi, Belagavi, Raichur and other districts will be given priority," the minister added.

Sudhakar further said the Union Government has allocated 1,200 MT of medical oxygen to Karnataka.

446 cases of black fungus in K'taka: Sudhakar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CASES of mucormycosis or black fungus are surging in the State with 446 people getting infected of which 433 are hospitalised and 11 are in home isolation. Also, 12 people have succumbed so far to the disease, said Health Minister **Dr K Sudhakar** on Monday.

Speaking to reporters, Sudhakar said that a primary report has revealed the presence of more than 400 cases in the State. With increase in cases, all district hospitals have been asked to be prepared to treat mucormycosis cases.

On procurement of drug to fight the infection, Sudhakar said the Union Government has allocated 1,150 vials of Amphotericin-B. "We have requested the Centre to allocate us 20,000 vials. I have personally discussed the issue with Union Minister DV Sadananda Gowda," he added.

He said before Covid-19, 200-300 people were annually getting infected with black fungus in the country. However, now over 300 people being infected in Karnataka alone and this could have led to the shortage of the vital drug, he said "Now, there is an increase in manufacturing of the medicine. 1,150 vials of the drug have reached the State. We are expecting 1,000 vials more in a day or two," he said.

101 infected in Vijayapura, Bagalkot

Vijayapura and Bagalkot are reporting a surge in black fungus cases, with the districts so far seeing 81 and 20 cases, respectively, as per Health Department data. However, the two districts have officially not reported any deaths due to fungal infection till date.

A committee has been constituted to find the cause of the infection and it was reported by it that contaminated water used in humidifiers, excessive use of steroids, unsterilised medical equipment, prolonged use of same mask, tube, beds and more are the primary source of mucormycosis, he added.The report also suggested to stop building renovation work in Covid hospitals, not allowing outsiders into ICU wards and ensure hygiene. ENT check-up has to be carried out after recovering from Covid on the 3rd, 7th and 21st days post-recovery.

Meanwhile, he said payment has been made to ASHA workers. Revision of payment has to be discussed with the Centre as they come under the National Health Mission, he added.

"We have more then 10 lakh quality PPE kits and the allegations suspecting its quality are flase," he added.

COVID BYTES

Hosps warned against not giving bodies to kin

Additional Secretary to Health Department Jawaid Akhtar has issued a circular warning private hospitals against not handing over bodies of Covid victims to their families. He said hospitals should give the bodies even if the families don't settle the bills. If hospitals fail to do this, then their licences will be cancelled, he said.

NOBLE CAUSE

He has taken on sacred duties of the unwanted dead

G SUBHASH CHANDRA
@ Chitradurga

MILAN Rafiq, who runs an old furniture shop in Hiriyur town, is not allowed to park his Maruti Omni in front of his house, and neither do his neighbours visit him. For he has converted his Omni into a hearse, and ferries bodies of Covid patients to graveyards and crematoriums.

His also completes the last rites, and has cremated and buried more than 200 bodies, of which around 80 were of Covid patients. His aim is to give people a final dignified departure, surprising at a time when friends and families are known to abandon both the living and dead.

"Covid has killed humanity. People are not ready to take care of their near and dear ones, including ailing parents on their deathbeds," said Rafiq.

He saw disowned bodies lying in the mortuary of Hiriyur Taluk Hospital, and it disturbed him so much that he decided to take on the last duties himself, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. He doesn't charge any money, only accepting whatever is given to him, which he uses for the next burial or cremation.

Milan rafiq (inset) and the vehicle he uses to ferry bodies of Covid victims

"Before taking the body, I ask the family to get the grave dug, so we can bury the body and close the grave. On an average, I cremate two bodies every day. On Sunday, I cremated four bodies in Chitradurga and Hiriyur," Rafiq told The New Indian Express. His has carried out cremations in Chitradurga, Bengaluru and Kolar districts, ferrying bodies from Bengaluru to Kolar, and Madhugiri in Tumakuru. At a time when ambulances charge exorbitant rates, Rafiq just asks where the body should be ferried and sets out in his Omni.

The cost of petrol and repairs is met by his group of friends, standing solidly behind him ever since he took up these humanitarian duties. "I am also using my fixed deposit, I cannot ask families for money when they are in pain. It would be a sin," he said.

Rafiq's wife Shahtaj Begum, son Mohammed Zubair and son-in-law Mohammed Ali support him and even help him with the last rites. They wear masks and PPE kits, and sanitise the Omni after work is done. He cites a recent ordeal where there was no one to give them even a glass of water.

"My son, son-in-law and I conducted the last rites and drank water only after returning to Hiriyur," he said. Rafiq freely gives his number -- 7259859407 -- for anytime, anywhere burials and cremations.

Following alleged harassment by her husband and in-laws, a lab technician hanged herself in Parappana Agrahara police station limits on Friday. Police said, Pavitra M (36), was married to Avinash, who had allegedly forced her to quit the job and allegedly harassed her mentally and physically

Volunteers of Indian Red Cross Society prepare dry food packets for cyclone-affected areas in Bhubaneswar | BISWANATH SWAIN

Yaas: Massive evacuation under way in Odisha

6,500 pregnant and expectant mothers shifted to hospitals; senior IAS, IPS officers assigned to districts to keep vigil

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bhubaneswar

WITH the cyclone 'Yaas' all set to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm in next 48 hours, the State government has launched a massive evacuation exercise in the low lying and vulnerable pockets of north coastal districts.

Official sources said evacuation has already started in Balasore district, which will be in the eye of the storm, and low lying areas of Kendrapara district where the storm surge is expected to inundate large areas. The evacuation process will be completed by Tuesday afternoon.Taking stock of the precautionary measures on Monday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urged the people to cooperate with the administration for shifting to safer places.During discussion with Union Home Minister Amit Shah regarding preparedness for the cyclone, the Chief Minister informed that the State is fully prepared.

"We are fully prepared and our officers are in touch with officials of the Centre. We will get back on requirements," he said. Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said over 6,500 pregnant and expecting mothers with estimated date of delivery before June 1 have already been shifted to hospitals in six districts. Arrangements have been made to provide dry and cooked food to the people at the cyclone shelters, the SRC said, adding that steps have been taken to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity and drinking water.

Andhra prepared for cyclone: CM

Vijayawada: Though Andhra Pradesh is unlikely to face the wrath of Cyclone Yaas, but the state government is ready to face any eventuality, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who participated in a video conference with Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the cyclone preparedness of five states, said. "Officials of all concerned departments attended the video conference and the state government is on high alert to deal with the cyclone," he said. Later, the CCM reviewed the movement of the storm, and precautionary measures in place.

Sexual harassment claims rock TN school

SUSHMITHA RAMAKRISHNAN
@ Chennai

SCORES of students and alumni of the Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan group of schools and its associate institutions have accused some teachers of making sexually coloured remarks and advances towards them. The incident has led to the suspension of one teacher, an inquiry by the School Education Department, and a police investigation.

The school management on Monday noon suspended a teacher, G Rajagopalan, from the KK Nagar branch, after several students and alumni alleged that he sexually misbehaved with them. Rajagopalan teaches Accountancy and Business Studies and is also the class teacher for Class 12 G2, according to the school's website.

Accusations included actions like showing up to online class in towel, touching students inappropriately, asking them out for movies at off-hours, sharing pornographic links on groups, and passing comments of a sexual nature on female students.

The incident came to light after Kripali, an alumni of the school, collated and shared screenshots of many students

sharing their ordeals of being harassed. One of the screenshots shows him topless, with just a cloth around his neck.

In the suspension memo, the PSBB management said, "Some very serious allegations of misconduct have been alleged against you and the same has come to our knowledge from and through social media (sic)." The school added that he will be suspended pending further enquiry.

Students have shared their experiences anonymously. Alumni of PSBB, on Sunday night, wrote a letter to the Dean, Director and Correspondent of PSBB group of schools, Sheela Rajendra, demanding immediate suspension of the accused. Rajendra told Express that PSBB is in the process of filing a police complaint.

'Covid +ves choose to die on trains'

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

FOR the past two months, there has been an increase in unnatural deaths occurring in trains or platforms in Karnataka. This is due to Covid-19 patients choosing to die inside trains or on the tracks, said the Government railway police (GRP).

On Monday, GRP head constable M Nagaraju performed the last rites for Bantulal Bain, a 48-year-old porter who died on a train from Bengaluru to Hyderabad. "As his family could not afford the transportation cost to take his body home, they requested Railways to help out," said a GRP release. Bain died on May 21 and the postmortem revealed he was Covid- positive, a source said.

This trend of Covid-positive people losing their lives after boarding trains, inside the railway station or on the tracks, was noticed during the second wave, said a source. "It was only after the postmortem reports revealed they were Covid patients that we concluded there was a link between the pandemic and the deaths. It could also be a case of a body being deliberately abandoned on the tracks by families," he added.

They are classified under 'unnatural deaths' initially until the postmortem reveals their Covid status. "We have recorded 14 deaths of Covid patients in April and May within the Bengaluru Division alone," the source added. Six of them were found dead inside trains while one was found in a train's toilet, the source said. "In many cases the family is unwilling to claim the body and our police perform the last rites," the source said.

Asked about the possibility of Covid patients boarding trains, Bengaluru Divisional Railway Manager, A K Verma said that the entrances to KSR as well as Yesvantpur railway stations had thermal scanners. "However, a Covid patient could have many other symptoms and not just high fever. I do not think that a person on the verge of dying can board a train and travel," he added.

K'taka HC to serve notices through mail

ENS @ Bengaluru

CONSIDERING the prevailing Covid situation, Karnataka High Court directed the state government to submit the list of email IDs of various departments of the state, boards and corporations and other statutory bodies to serve notices through emails in writ petitions and appeals being filed before the court on Monday.

A division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice Suraj Govindaraj issued direction during the hearing of suo moto proceedings initiated in order to address the issues arising due to the pandemic. Presently, all the HC benches are hearing cases through virtual mode. Referring to this, the court said that the notice have to be served through email in writ petitions and appeals to the central government, state government, statutory bodies and corporations like BBMP and BDA.

Meanwhile, the court has extended time to district and trial courts to complete trial by three months.

Health workers to collect villagers' swab samples'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

BUT the villagers were shocked when the horse died on Sunday. Videos of the last rites of the horse went viral on social media sites.

Gokak Tahsildar Prakash Huleppgol, who noticed all this, marched into the village with police officers on Sunday and got Maradimath and the surrounding areas sealed.

Policemen have now been stationed at the village to enforce Covid-related restrictions.

Tahsildar Holeppagol told The New Indian Express, "A team from the health department will be sent to collect throat swab samples of all villagers in the area."

EXPRESS READ

POWERGRID organises vax camp for staff

Bengaluru: Government of India Maharatna CPSU, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has been organising vaccination camps for its employees in all the establishments of. A camp was organised at Southern Region-II, Regional Headquarters, Bengaluru for the benefit of employees, dependent/non-dependent family members of RHQ, Yelahanka Sub-station, RPT HVDC office and AMC frontline warriors. About 200 doses of vaccination were administered in collaboration with Manipal Hospitals, Bengaluru. POWERGRID continues to remain committed in Government of India's vision to complete the largest vaccination drive in the world.

CHHATTISGARH STATE POWER TRANSMISSION CO. LTD
(A Government of Chhattisgarh Undertaking)
Office of the Executive Director (Planning & Projects)
CIN - U40108CT2003SGC015820, GST No. 22AADCC5773E1ZX
Address : 3rd floor, SLDC Building, Danganiya Raipur - 492013.
Website : www.cspc.co.in, Phone 0771-2574238/12/09, Fax : 0771-2574246

No.02-04/NIT/TR-20/07/218 Raipur/dtd. -22.05.2021

E-NOTICE INVITING TENDER (E-bidding)

Sealed tenders are invited from experienced Bidders for taking up the following project on turnkey basis :

Tender No.	TR-20/7 (RFX No. 8100021891)
Particulars	Construction of LILO of 132 KV Bhilai-ACC line and termination of 132KV Bhilai - Kurud line at proposed 132/33 KV Sub-Station LIA Chhawani, Bhilai (RL-Approx 0.350 KM using 04 No. Narrow Base Tower and 01 No. Tension Tower
Cost of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)	Rs. 5,600/- (Printed) Rs. 5,900 (Downloaded)
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1.15 Lac
Due date of opening of tender	29.06.2021 15.30 hrs.

For all other details of NIT and Terms & conditions, please visit our website https://cspc.co.in/cspc/csptcl->Tender Notice.
E-bidding Portal : https://ebidding.cspcl.co.in:50724/irj/portal.

Sd/-
Executive Director (PLanning & Projects)
CSPTCL : Raipur

28814/5

SAVE ENERGY FOR THE BENEFITS OF SELF & NATION

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Division, West Zone, BBMP, 2nd Floor, Joint Commissioner (West) Office Premises, Sampige Road, Bhashyam Park, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru

No.: BBMP/EE/Project(W)/TEND/05/2021-22 Date: 24.05.2021

INVITATION FOR TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Two Cover System)

Tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer, Project Division, West Zone for the Services mentioned below under the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 2000 through electronic two cover tendering system (e-Procurement) in prescribed format from registered agencies with I.T, E.S.I, P.F., Labour Department and other statutory authority of Government of Karnataka Organizations.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Period for Completion of Work
1	Collection of entry fees at 4 Main Entrances (Gates) in SKR Market in **Ward No. 139,** Chamarajpet Division.	12 Months

Paying of EMD for this work is exempted as per GOK Order No: ಆಇ 675 ಮೆಚ್ಚ-12/2020, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು (ದಿನಾಂಕ: 22-12-2020 ರಿಂದ 31-12-2021ರ ವರೆಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ)

Calendar of Events: (1) Documents can be downloaded from e-Procurement Website from: **26.05.2021** onwards. **(2)** Last date & times for tender queries and downloading the application: **08.06.2021** upto **3:00 P.M. (3)** Pre-bid Meeting: **09.06.2021** at **3:30 P.M. (4)** Last Date for Submission of Tender document: **11.06.2021** upto **4:00 P.M. (5)** Opening of Technical Bid: **14.06.2021** at **11:30 A.M. (6)** Opening of Financial Bid: **16.06.2021 (If possible).** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project Division, West Zone, BBMP

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

QuoteExpress IF YOU'RE GOING THROUGH HELL, KEEP GOING > WINSTON CHURCHILL

Police Department
Office of the Additional Director General of Police, Police Computer Wing, 7th Floor, M.S. Building, Gate-1 Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560 001. Tel No.: **22943784** E-mail: **adgppcw@ksp.gov.in**

NO. 04/STS/ADGP/PCW/2021-22 Dated:20.05.2021

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

The tender is invited in "Two Cover System" as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through e-Tender of Government of Karnataka website **(www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in)** for supply and Install of following items required to Karnataka State Police Data Center in Police Department. Tender No.04/STS/ADGP/PCW/2021-22. **(1)** Next Generation Firewall (NGFW) Internal. Qty:**2. (2)** Web Application Firewall. Qty: **1. (3)** Threat Prevention Solution. Qty: **1. (4)** Layer 3 Core Switch. Qty: **2. (5)** Tape Library & Backup Solution. Qty: **2.** Last date for submission of tender: **19.06.2021 at 5.30 P.M.** Tender forms containing technical specifications, can be downloaded from **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**Thosewhoarewillingtoimplement the project must necessarily be registered in e-Procurement portal. The training about e-Procurement is being provided at e-Procurement Cell, e-Governance Department, M.S. Building, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560 001. The vendors may contact the helpline No.080-25501216, 25201227. For further details the vendors are requested to visit website: **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in (1)** Downloading of tender document & last date of submission of tender document: **From 21.05.2021to19.06.2021 before 17:30Hrs. (2)**EMD:**Rs.5,42,800/-. (3)** Pre-bid Meeting: **28.05.2021 at 11:30 Hrs. (4)** Technical Bid:**22.06.2021 at 11:30 hrs. (5)** Commercial Bid: **25.06.2021 at 12:00 Hrs.** For further information the above office can be contacted during office hours.

DIPR/DDU/405/MCA/2021-22

Police Department
Office of the Additional Director General of Police, Police Computer Wing, 7th Floor, M.S. Building, Gate-1 Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560 001. Tel No.: **22943784** E-mail: **adgppcw@ksp.gov.in**

NO. 25/STS/ADGP/PCW/2021-22/Call-2 Dated:21.05.2021

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

The tender is invited in "Two Cover System" as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through e-Tender of Government of Karnataka website **(www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in)** for supply and Install of following items required to Karnataka State Police Date Center in Police Department. Tender No.25/STS/ADGP/PCW/2020-21/Call-2. Particulars: **Auto Main Change Over Panel.** Qty: **1.** Last date for submission of Tender: **07.06.2021 at 5.30 P.M.** Tender forms containing technical specifications, can be downloaded from **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** Those who are willing to implement the project must necessarily be registered in e-Procurement portal. The training about e-Procurement is being provided at e-Procurement Cell, e-Governance Department, M.S. Building, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560 001. The vendors may contact the helpline No.080-25501216, 25201227. For further details the vendors are requested to visit website:**https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** Tender Document will be available on **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in from 24.05.2021, (1)** Downloading of tender document & last date of submission of tender document: **From 24.05.2021 to 07.06.2021 before 17:30 Hrs. (2)** EMD: **Rs.28,000/-. (3)** Pre-bid Meeting: **29.05.2021 at 11:30 Hrs. (4)** Technical Bid:**10.06.2021 at 11:30 hrs. (5)** Commercial Bid: **14.06.2021 at 12:00 Hrs.** For further information the above office can be contacted during office hours.

DIPR/DDU/406/MCA/2021-22

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD
O/o Chief General Manager (Engg), Revenue Circle, Khairatabad, Hyderabad- 500 004. T.S.

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tender No. & Date	Type of Work	ECV (Rs.)
e'Tender No: EP.40 / CGM(E) / Rev.Circle / CRMC /2021-22, Date:24-05-2021	Manning, Operation and Maintenance of the Customer Relation Management Cell (CRMC) call center for HMWSSB for a period of 2 years including all taxes, duties etc. Complete as directed by the HMWSSB Officials.	Rs. 1,47,36,000=00

(1) e-Tender details & document will be available through online from the website **https://tender.telangana.gov.in** from **24-05-2021 @ 05:00 PM** and last date of submission of document of e-Tender Proposal is **08.06.2021 @ 12:00 PM (2)** Name & address of the e-Tender inviting authority: **Chief General Manager (E), HMWSSB, Revenue Circle, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-04.**

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg), Revenue Circle, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500 004. T.S.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Office of the Executive Engineer, No.1 Buildings Division, S.J.P. Campus, Bangalore. Ph: 080-22255210, Fax: 080-22250755, e-mail: eebld1@kpwd.gov.in / eebld1@yahoo.com

IFT No: EE/BId1/AE-4/05/2021-22 Date: 20-05-2021

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

1) The Executive Engineer, No.1, Buildings Division, Bangalore invites tenders from eligible tenderers, for the construction of works detailed in the Table below. The tenderers may submit tenders for any or all the works given in the Table through e-Procurement portal of the Government of Karnataka (viz **http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in). The Tenderers are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the Instructions to Tenderers to qualify for award of the contract. (Standard Tender Document - KW4).**
2) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-Procurement portal of the Government of Karnataka **from 20-05-2021 to 27-05-2021. 3)** Tenders must be accompanied by earnest money deposit specified for the work in the Table below. Earnest money deposit will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the Tender document and shall have to be valid for **45 days beyond** the validity of the tender. **4)** Tenders must be submitted online through e-Procurement portal **on or before 17.00 hours on 27-05-2021** and the opening of tenders will be as per the e-Procurement portal guidelines **on 28-05-2021 at 17.30 PM.5)** Other details can be seen in the tender documents.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approximate Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)
1	Detailed Estimate for Providing Colour Contrasting Strips, Handrail, Repair of existing Toilet, Signage, Tactile Rubber Mats (Tactile Floor Mats) at M.S. Buildings, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore. **KPWD/2019-20/BD/WORK_ INDENT119941.**	197.27	2,96,000/-
2	Providing accessible Parking and Route, Handrail Ramps 1:12, Renovation of existing Toilet (39) Signage, Tactile Tiles, Re-Flooring at K.C. General Hospital, Malleshwaram, Bangalore. **KPWD/2019-20/BD/WORK_ INDENT118966.**	178.85	2,69,000/-

Cost of Document (in Rs.): **for Sl. No. 1 & 2 - As per e-Portal** Period of Completion: **for Sl.No. 1 & 2 - 3 Month each (Including Rainy Season),** Number of Call: **for both Sl. No. 1 & 2 - 2nd Call,** Category: **for both Sl. No. 1 & 2 - Other**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
No.1, Buildings Division, Bangalore.

DIPR/DDU/Adverto/414/2021-22

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE
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Paribahan Bhavan, Sachivalaya Marg, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar - 751001, Odisha, India | Email: - osrtc@nic.in | Tel: - +91-674-2530908

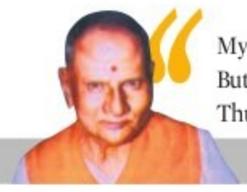
Memo No. 659 /TOE 82/2020 Dt.21/05/2021

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
FOR SELECTION OF MANPOWER SERVICE PROVIDING AGENCY FOR MANAGING BUS OPERATIONS AND OTHER ALIGNED WORKS OF OSRTC,

1. Odisha State road Transport Corporation (OSRTC) invites proposal from interested manpower service providing agencies for the above mentioned purpose. Please refer the RFP document for details.
2. The RFP document shall be available from **Dt.25.05.2021** onwards in following web portals: **www.osrtc.in** and **further intimation (i.e. Corrigendum/ Addendum/ Responses to the queries/Clarifications) shall be uploaded in the above website only.**
3. Applicants are required to submit duly filled proposal as per the prescribed formats on or before **Dt.18.06.2021 by 03:00 PM**. The proposals received shall be opened at **04:00 P**M on **18.06.2021**.
4. In case any queries/clarifications, please contact +91-8240167711 / 9438689207 or e-mail at **osrtc@nic.in.**
5. OSRTC reserves the right to accept or reject bid process without assigning any reason thereof.

By order of the Chairman-cum-Managing Director.
General Manager (Admn.)
Odisha State Road Transport Corporation

EDITORIAL



"My experience is that everything is bliss. But the desire for bliss creates pain. Thus bliss becomes the seed of pain

Nisargadatta Maharaj

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

BAD NEWS ON A CONVEYOR BELT AS YAAS GETS CLOSER

Tauktae, named after the Burmese gecko, has just left our West coast mauled. Now, a deep depression in East-Central Bay of Bengal has intensified into a moving, lethal force—christened 'Yaas', after an Omanese tree. East and West confound us; danger pounces on us from every cardinal direction. Yaas, about 600 km off Port Blair as we write this, will intensify into a 'severe cyclonic storm' in a day, and worsen into a 'very severe' one in another day. In short, another super cyclone for Odisha and West Bengal. This alert reads like one in a series of old-style telegrams that carried bad news on a conveyor belt—like war dispatches from the frontline.

There's little doubt that nature has declared war on us. Repeat offenders that we are. The sea surface is so heated, it's lashing out at the adjoining landmass in episodic bursts of anger. A pandemic is already sucking the breath out of our lungs, and another devilish duo stalks us in deadly chiaroscuro—fungus, in black and white. One who warned us about such a dystopia has just left us, as if in despair. Sunderlal Bahuguna always said we cannot afford to imagine 'development' as a set of goals to be accomplished against nature—we must move in harmony with it, as part of it. That nature will eventually engulf and destroy that which tries to exist in utter contravention of its rules. Remember those trees the brave women of the Chipko movement tried to save, inspired by Bahuguna and his intense, homegrown conviction? Those trees, those women, and Bahuguna … they stand like lost sentinels calling to us again. This time, it's not just the Himalayas that are at stake, but the whole chain of beings on this planet. The Global Climate Conference in November under UK-Italy—both scarred Covid survivors—better give us a blueprint for the future, if there is to be a future.

WHEN SPORTS STARS FALL FROM GRACE

Sunday was World Wrestling Day. It was meant to celebrate those unique athletes who have the style, swagger and ability to beat fellow human beings in a grappling contest. In India, the sport has a special significance. Independent India's first individual Olympic medal came in wrestling. In the new millennium, the sport received a bigger push that was rewarded when Sushil Kumar rose to the top to put the country on the world wrestling map. Not once but twice did he win a medal at the Summer Games (2008 and 2012). Sushil had transcended sport. What he did inspired scores more to pick it up. The wrestling mat became a natural calling card thanks to him. Dreams, his medals showed, can be fulfilled. In short, Sunday should have been a celebration of Sushil's career. Instead, as dawn gave way to summer sunshine, a video clip offered the first glimpse of the star wrestler's fall from grace. He had been paraded, face concealed by a nondescript towel, by the cops after a more than two-week journey from state to state as he evaded the authorities.

There is a sense of pathos whenever a sportsperson falls. The romanticism of a sportsperson's rise is magical. Their rise is a reminder that the impossible is possible, that one can triumph despite everything stacked against them. Sportspersons are icons. They are not meant to go astray and mix with the wrong and evil. They are supposed to play by life's manual. When Tiger Woods was detained 'driving under the influence' or when Mike Tyson was imprisoned or back home when Paan Singh Tomar was marauding the ravines of Chambal or Oscar Pistorius … the cathartic reaction always was more of disbelief than anger. Because sportspersons are turned into demi-gods and considered the living personification of all that's good. Call it quirk of fate or fit of rage or a lapse of judgement, everything can change within seconds. Sushil's story is no different. In the twilight of his career, he has gone astray. It's a story straight out of Greek mythology. Overcome by the excitement of flying, Icarus flew too close to the sun. It resulted in his death. What's the fate that awaits Sushil?

The pandemic has shown us that it is now time to think in the language of all as opposed to the language of the competitively ahead in modern society

NO ONE IS SAFE UNTIL EVERYONE IS SAFE

HARISH BIJOOR

Brand Guru & Founder, Harish Bijoor Consults

AMIT BANDRE

In the beginning there was the world. A world put together by accident or design? No one is sure. Into this world came the elements of earth, fire, water and air. And around these elements developed life as we know it. Life as we recognise it.

People happened all over a world that became inhabitable. And life itself of every variety happened. The birds, the bees, and the flora and fauna of every kind came by. Everything obviously had a meaning. All existence of every kind had a meaning etched into its very DNA of existence. There was a method to the ostensible madness.

Let's talk about people. The human being. The one species credited with a thinking mind (not necessarily evolved) and equally the one discredited to date with ill-intent to the earth that baffles many. But then, even this must have a meaning. Who is to tell? And who is to know?

The ill-intent of man stretches deep into history. A grab-and-take nature, illustrated to death by the one visual of the early caveman grabbing a woman and slinging her on his shoulders to satisfy his carnal needs is but one. And that's ancient history. Man evolved in his needs. He learnt to hide his real needs and started to run behind his hungry wants, his greedy desires and his irrational aspirations. Thus began the story of modern, and ostensibly evolved, man.

Today we live in a society that is driven by a sheer hunger to achieve and perform. The early animal drive has found its way into something that seeks progress and development. Progress is hitched to development as an adjunct, and the two remain inseparable Siamese twins, joined at the hip. And everybody runs behind these elusive twins.

The visual imagery of progress and development has somehow achieved the dominant status of one common goal that thrives in every mind. The ability to own wealth, live a good lifestyle (whatever that means eventually), thrive in terms of starting and creating a family, spend and save for tomorrow and generations to come, seem to be common societal goals today. Not many question this. Even governments embody this into their goals. Metrics of measurement of success seem to inevitably land up at these commonly accepted (but certainly not acceptable) notions. The vision, mission and purpose of modern man are somehow inextricably linked to these twins that dominate our imagination.

The purpose of education, governance, infrastructure development and even healthcare management seem to gravitate around these twins. The only off-shoot that does not recognise these as the basic purpose of everything is religion (of every hue and colour) and the pursuit of spirituality. But these are really not mainstream activities of man. Man has somehow developed a clever way of keeping everything in its place, prioritising the twins over all else. And therefore the influence of religion at best remains peripheral as man runs behind progress and development.

What's wrong with progress? Nothing really. What's wrong with development? Nothing again! There is just nothing wrong with the two, just as long as the real priorities of man do not get subjugated at the altar of the two. But it does, as we have lived and seen.

> The visual imagery of progress and development has somehow achieved the dominant status of one common goal that thrives in every mind. The ability to own wealth, live a good lifestyle (whatever that means eventually), thrive in terms of starting and creating a family, spend and save for tomorrow and generations to come, seem to be common societal goals today. Not many question this

The world has had modern civilisations live in it now from as early as 3000 BC. In all these years, destruction and a complete lack of respect for nature as is given to us seems to be a common thread. We have built wonderful things around us for our comfort, at times possibly not giving a hoot about any other life form. As insensitivity to other life forms got accolades from all and no brickbats from anyone, we looked at ourselves as groups. We started competing. We very erroneously started dividing society into the groups of those who must have and those who must not. Money and the enterprise of man ensured this happened by default. And then society got divided into the various class structures we now struggle to thrive within. The quest is the same. All of us run behind progress and development, but each socio-economic group finds it differently difficult to achieve these goals. The rich therefore remain rich and become richer. The middle class struggles on. The poor either become richer or poorer, depending on the environmental factors that govern their lives and livelihoods.

Modern society is very competitive today. As we continue this race towards progress and development, the pandemic in our midst (sudden and as big as it is) is telling us something. The pandemic is telling us something simple. Something real and intuitive. Something we know all the time, but forget.

Society means all of us. It does not mean the rich are separated from the poor by the tall gates and high walls of their exclusive community. The pandemic has put it bluntly into our faces: No one is safe till everyone is safe! There is beauty in the current pandemic. This is a comma moment, thankfully, not a full-stop one. The pandemic is telling us all something. But are we listening?

The run behind the twins has blinded us. It is time to really think in the language of all as opposed to the language of the competitively ahead in modern society. If all of us are wealthy, our wealth is real and sustainable. If everyone is healthy, only then are you and I healthy. A completely vaccinated world today is a safe world. An incompletely vaccinated world is an incomplete world! A telling truth.

(harishbijoor@hotmail.com)

BLACK FUNGUS: DEBUNKING A MYTH, REDUCING THE RISK

DR SATYANARAYANA MYSORE

Renowned Pulmonologist and HOD, Sleep Medicine, Manipal Hospitals, Bengaluru

We live in uncertain times. The second wave of the pandemic, along with the looming threat of the 'black fungus', has laid waste to hundreds of thousands of people. Mucormycosis, colloquially known as the black fungus, has been found to grow in the soil, damp areas, old buildings and may even live in our noses. Historically, mucormycosis has been diagnosed in patients with uncontrolled diabetes and in immunocompromised patients such as those with AIDS. We are now seeing a resurgence of the disease in the wake of the second Covid wave. Patients usually present with symptoms in the third week of illness when they seem to be on the path to recovery. Commonly, patients complain of eye pain and sinus issues, while lung and gastrointestinal involvement are not unheard of.

The pertinent question that has to be answered today is why are we seeing an explosion of mucomycosis now, during the second wave, when treatment protocols, especially the use of steroids, have not changed all that much. Off the bat, steroids, used in appropriate doses, are life-saving drugs in the treatment of Covid pneumonia, as evidenced in the RECOVERY trial. Hence, steroids in themselves cannot be the scapegoat in this fresh epidemic of black fungus. While the exact ethology of mucormycosis in Covid will require extensive study and research, a few ideas that can contribute to a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between the two are as follows

1. The new mutant strain of the coronavirus potentially has a greater suppressive effect on T cell immunity leaving the body defenceless in the face of secondary infections. Combined with the immunosuppressive action of steroids and other drugs like tocilizumab along with comorbidities including uncontrolled diabetes, it provides a fertile breeding ground for fungal spores leading to florid mucormycosis.

2. Excessive use of steam inhalation, as advised by WhatsApp gurus, has led to scalding of the nasal passages in patients, which on exposure to fungal spores can serve as a site for infection. Another aspect of steam inhalation is the unknown quality of the water being used for inhalation purpose; the use of a contaminated water source can be a potential locus for infection.

3. While use of face masks is the golden rule for preventing coronavirus spread, reusing the same mask many times without proper cleaning can be a potential cause for the rapid spread of mucormycosis in this second wave.

> Extensive media coverage about the black fungus has led to fear among the public about the use of steroids in the treatment of Covid pneumonia. It becomes important to dispel this myth and educate the public that the use of steroids in appropriate doses can be life-saving. … Some ways to reduce the risk include wearing a clean mask, avoiding excessive steam inhalation, Covid-appropriate behaviour and proper control of diabetes

The population at risk of contracting mucormycosis include those with uncontrolled diabetes and severe Covid pneumonia, immunocompromised patients on long-term steroid/immunosuppressive treatment, prolonged ICU stay and renal failure. As mucormycosis can have a variety of presentations, early diagnosis is crucial for favourable clinical outcomes. Preferred modalities of investigation include nasal endoscopy, functional endoscopic sinus surgery, bronchoalveolar lavage and lung biopsy that are used to demonstrate the fungal presence in the body. Once the diagnosis has been established, treatment protocols have to be instituted aggressively. Surgical debridement, use of Amphotericin B and other antifungal agents for around three-six weeks constitute the mainstay of treatment.

Surviving Covid pneumonia is an ordeal that saps the body of its vitality, allowing the black fungus to deliver the knockout punch. Extensive media coverage about the black fungus has led to fear among the public about the use of steroids in the treatment of Covid pneumonia. It becomes important to dispel this myth, and educate the public that the use of steroids in appropriate doses can be life-saving. As healthcare workers, it is imperative that we have a detailed discussion with the patient and their family about the role of steroids in the treatment of Covid pneumonia. Another common query is whether there is any preventive medication for mucormycosis. Use of prophylactic medication is uncommon, but steps can be taken to reduce the risk. Some suggestions that can be followed are wearing a clean mask, avoiding excessive steam inhalation, Covid-appropriate behaviour and proper control of diabetes under the guidance of an endocrinologist.

Theories linking the new mutated strain of Covid pneumonia with increased immune suppression leading to mucormycosis have to be thoroughly investigated and research into novel treatment protocols have to be initiated. We have to put the lessons we have learnt from two devastating waves of the pandemic to use and get ahead of this black fungus epidemic. The mantra to navigating this successfully remains the same: wear masks, maintain social distance, observe appropriate hand hygiene and get vaccinated at your turn. Stay safe.

(satya.mysore@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Draining fuel price surge

The relentless surge in fuel prices in this Covid-ravaged period is like rubbing salt in our wounds. The already restricted movement of people will be further hampered due to the draining of people's purses.

Sanath Kumar T S, Thrissur

Keep mobile shops open

The government's measures to shut down all non-essential services to contain Covid is appreciated. However, it needs to include mobile shops and service centres into essential services and allow them to function during the lockdown. Nothing works without a mobile in the present day, especially as many people are working from home. Phone shops and repair centres are thus vital for people.

HS Shankar, Bengaluru

Calling Didi's bluff

This is with reference to *Deconstructing Didi's histrionics at Modi's meet* (May 24). The editorial has rightly called Didi's bluff. After her grand win, she seems to be picking a fight with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on every issue with the intention to project herself as the only non-BJP leader capable of taking him on.

Hemanth Bhide, Mangaluru

Be more humble

Mamata always appears to be in combat mode with the Centre. It is true that she was able to stop the BJP in West Bengal, but she must also show humbleness towards the Centre and implement its directives for the benefit of the people. She may have won in Bengal, but they won in the Lok Sabha elections.

Ram Saran Singh, Bengaluru

Protests during Covid

Punjab CM Amarinder Singh seems to not be in favour of the Bharatiya Kisan Union's proposal to organise a three-day *dharna* in Patiala due to the Covid situation. Yet, opposition leaders had no qualms in supporting the months-long protest against the Centre earlier, though Covid was very much present then.

V S Raman, Thanjavur

Not the right time

Delhi has been in the throes of the second wave for the last month. The numbers have only just begun coming down slowly. It is an inappropriate time to protest against farm laws and the support being extended by the opposition is unacceptable. Mass gatherings at such a serious time must be avoided at all costs.

S Arjun Prasanna, Bengaluru

Welcome step by UP govt

To increase the pace of vaccination in rural India, the UP government has decided to rope in common service centres to help people in these areas register for the jab on CoWin. This is a welcome step. Such a move will help increase the percentage of rural population to get inoculated.

P Victor Selvaraj, Palayamkottai

Inoculation problems

Even in urban areas, people are being made to wait indefinitely for their second vaccine dose. The CoWin portal is not always working. In rural areas, the internet seems to be absent more often than not. How then can we serve the rural population without having mass drives, which would just give the virus a bigger breeding ground?

M S R Rao, Bengaluru

Problems in healthcare

This is with reference to *Healthcare on the brink: A cry for help* (May 24). The authors have touched upon pertinent points about the healthcare system in India. The pandemic laid bare many problems. We need to properly develop the long-neglected and ignored health infrastructure.

C Ghanshyam, Visakhapatnam

Follow safety protocols

Cyclone Yaas is expected to hit the coasts of West Bengal and Odisha soon. Keeping this in mind, the Odisha government has allowed shops to be open for longer, despite the lockdown. But in this bargain, social distancing is not being followed in markets. Authorities must ensure all safety protocols are followed.

Sarmistha Pradhan, Cuttack

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Shashi Tharoor @ShashiTharoor
Still baffling that someone who won two elections by projecting himself as a strong decisive leader needs to blame previous Govts for all problems & shed helpless tears

Jairam Ramesh @Jairam_Ramesh
India was late to place orders because of overconfidence and hubris! The PM and his drumbeaters were busy tom-tomming their Vaccine Maitri initiative, which has flopped

Jignesh Mevani @jigneshmevani80
Amphotericin B must be made available by Gujarat government. Doctors on my Twitter - is there a way this medication be procured from elsewhere?

Vaccine mix & match not the priority in India

Oxford study suggests two shots made by different companies may work, but officials focus on increasing supply

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

SEVERAL countries are weighing the option of mixing and matching Covid-19 vaccines, amid supply delays and safety concerns, after evidence from scientific studies indicated that it may work. But the proposition is not being explored in India presently, authorities told this newspaper.

The first findings of an Oxford University-led study, supported by a study in Spain, found that people who received Pfizer's vaccines followed by a dose of AstraZeneca's, or vice versa, were more likely to report mild or moderate common post-vaccination symptoms than those who receive two doses of the same. Also, the combination of two vaccines showed they were highly effective against the infection.

Officials involved in vaccine administration in India, however, said that priority now is to ensure quick management of the second wave and enhanced vaccine supply to the states.

"We have discussed the new scientific evidence but there is no plan to carry out any related research in the country, which will essentially mean conducting clinical trials in people with two different vaccines," said Samiran Panda, chief epidemiologist at the ICMR, and senior member of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19. The same was confirmed by a top official in the health ministry.

The stand taken by the government has so far found the support of some specialists, who feel the immediate priority is quick supply of vaccines. "From an immunology viewpoint, mixing two types of vaccines is not a problem. But studies show some more reactogenicity or minor side effects," said virologist Shahid Jameel. "Whether it should be explored in India will depend on the basket of vaccines available. At this point, we should not divert our attention from increasing vaccine supply."

In India, three vaccines are available — Covishield (AstraZeneca's Indian version), Covaxin and Sputnik V. While Covishield and Sputnik V are made on viral vector platforms using adenoviruses, Covaxin is an inactivated vaccine, made of killed SARS CoV 2.

So far, there has been no study in India on mix and match of vaccines even though the country is struggling to scale up its vaccination drive and ensure wide inoculation coverage in order to avoid future waves of the pandemic.

Some experts, on the other hand, backed such research in the Indian context. "It may be an interesting proposition, given the variant strains that are running amok at present. There are apprehensions around wild-type, spike-directed vaccines falling short on curbing some of the new variants," said immunologist Dipyaman Ganguly.

Patients across age groups at a congested Covid-19 ward in Jawaharlal Nehru hospital in Ajmer on Monday. Like rest of India, the situation in Rajasthan continues to be worrisome | PTI

B.1.617 variant found in 65% of samples

New Delhi: The B.1.617 variant of Covid-19 virus, first detected in Maharashtra and thought to be more transmissible and driving the second wave of the pandemic, has been found in nearly 65% samples sequenced in the country. This information was shared by Union health minister Harsh Vardhan in a group of ministers meeting on Monday.

Factory to vaccination venue takes 8-9 days through several steps, says Centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

AMID concerns that not all Covid-19 vaccines produced in India are immediately available for the country's vaccination drive, the Centre on Monday clarified that there is a time lag of at least 8-9 days in vaccines reaching vaccination centres from the factories.

A look at available data suggests that while Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech may be producing 6 crore and 2 crore doses of Covishield and Covaxin, respectively, in May, total vaccinations this month at the most will touch only the 5 crore mark.

Responding to this concern in a press briefing on Monday, Lav Agarwal, joint secretary in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said that all vaccines first undergo statutory stability and sterility tests at the factories, which takes about a week.

"Then they are divided into batches and each batch is sent to the Central Drugs Laboratories at Kasauli for testing, which takes 1-2 days more. It takes about 8-9 days before a vaccine produced today to be available for use at a vaccination centre," he said.

The ministry insisted that it was coordinating with foreign vaccine manufacturers Pfizer and Moderna in two ways: approval and procurement. Based on their replies, the Centre will decide on allocation of vaccine doses to states.

"We are coordinating with (Pfizer and Moderna)... It depends on (their) surplus (stock) and how much they can provide to India. They will come back to us and we will ensure and facilitate the vaccine procurement," he said. "On that basis we may be able to supply to the states."

These remarks come in the backdrop of states like Delhi and Punjab saying that the foreign vaccine manufacturing companies Pfizer and Moderna have declined to engage with states and said that they will deal only with the Centre.

Meanwhile Pfizer, whose negotiation with the Indian government is stuck over the indemnity clause as it wants complete protection from lawsuits in cases of adverse events following immunisation, told this newspaper that discussions are still being held.

Pfizer's discussions with the Government of India are ongoing. We are hopeful to bring the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for use in the country. Unable to divulge further details at the moment —Company spokesperson

WAR OF WORDS

Congress terms govt's 'buy the dose' step cynical

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WITH vaccine manufacturers Pfizer and Moderna refusing to deal with state governments, the Congress on Monday attacked the Centre, saying that the Modi government allowing states to procure vaccine was a cynical move, considering that these vaccines have not been approved for use in the country.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said vaccination is the key to controlling the pandemic, but the government of India does not seem to care about it. "Vaccination is the key to controlling the pandemic but GOI doesn't seem to care. Why doesn't the Central government understand this simple fact?" he tweeted and posted a graphic chart to show how vaccination has substantially come down from April.

Former Union minister P Chidambaram also slammed the Centre for asking states to directly negotiate with vaccine producers. "Is there any surprise that Pfizer and Moderna have refused to deal with states (Punjab, Delhi) and will deal only with the Central government? The Central government's direction to the states to procure vaccines directly from the manufacturers abroad was a cynical move. If Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have not yet been 'approved for use' by the Central government, how will they deal with or sell to the states?" he asked.

The former Union minister from Chennai further said that the BJP government has rebuffed their advice and the suggestion of the courts that procurement of vaccines must be centralised. "The Modi government is callous and cruel. Meanwhile, the shortage of vaccines will continue and the people of the country will suffer and thousands will die. What a tragedy!" added Chidambaram.

This seems to have become the latest topic of heated debate between the leaders of Congress and BJP, who are loggerheads as usual.

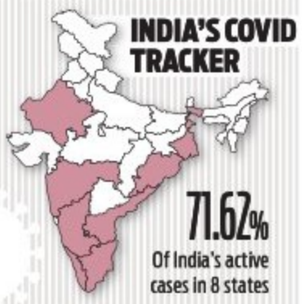
Punjab govt asks Centre to intervene

Punjab is staring at a shortage of vaccines. After Moderna, Pfizer on Monday refused to send vaccines directly to the state government. The Punjab government has written to the Centre to ask these companies to supply vaccines to the state government. Till date, 45.03 lakh doses were supplied to the state by the Centre. The state bought another 4.29 lakh doses.

After Moderna refused to directly send vaccines to us, Pfizer has also refused. We got similar e-mail from them. Pfizer said it's working with federal governments

Punjab nodal officer

INDIA'S COVID TRACKER



71.62%
Of India's active cases in 8 states

Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Odisha

8.09% Test positivity rate

18 States with death below national avg

88.69% National recovery rate

18 States with death below national avg

1.14% National mortality rate

11 Days with recovery topping cases

NHRC seeks report on ASHA workers

The National Human Rights Commission has sought reports from the Centre and states on the "poor working conditions" of ASHA workers engaded in health duty in the country.

SC ASKS CENTRE ABOUT POLICY FOR COMPENSATION

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre if there was any policy or scheme under the National Disaster Management Act, 2005, to pay ex gratia compensation of ₹4 lakh to the kin of persons who died in the Covid-19 pandemic.

A vacation bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and M R Shah also asked the Centre to place before it the ICMR guidelines on death certificates for Covid-19 victims, saying there should be uniform policy for issuing such documents. The court was hearing two pleas seeking directions to the Centre and states to provide Rs 4 lakh as compensation to the families of coronavirus victims as provisioned under the Disaster Management Act, and a uniform policy for issuing death certificates.

The bench said unless there was a uniform policy for issuance of official document or death certificate stating that the cause of death was Covid, the kin of the victims would not be able to claim benefits of any compensation scheme. The bench asked: "How will you identify beneficiaries when death certificates don't mention the disease?"

"I'm saying from personal experience that when a person is admitted for Covid, death certificate does not say death is by Covid. It says death due to lung infection or heart issue. Family members don't know anything," Justice Shah said. "And people have to run pillar to post. If there is any scheme for compensation, how will you identify the beneficiary? Is there a uniform policy on the death certificate to identify cause of death? Shouldn't the death certificate say it's death by Covid?" asked the bench. The next hearing will be on June 11, when the Centre is expected to file its response.

The court was hearing PILs filed by lawyers Gaurav Bansal and Reepak Kansal, who had raised the issue of ex-gratia compensation.

Speed up migrant worker registration: Court

The Supreme Court on Monday said the process of registration of migrant workers is very slow and it must be expedited so that benefits of the schemes can be extended to them amid the pandemic. The court observed it is not happy with the efforts of the Centre as well as the states on the issue of registration of unorganised workers.

New areas see huge spike in Maha second wave

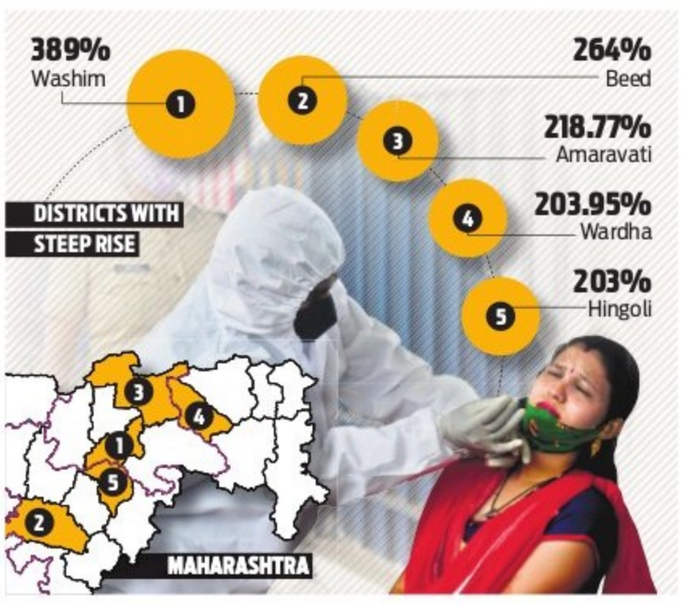
SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE Covid-19 second wave has not only been lethal in Maharashtra, but it has spread to places where the first wave did not. That has resulted in a major surge in far-flung rural and tribal districts of the state.

The average growth of positive cases in the second wave in Maharashtra has been 39.10 per cent, with 4,19,727 positive cases, as against 3,01,752 cases in the first wave last year.

According to data from the health department of Maharashtra, in the fast and furious second Covid-19 wave in the Washim district of Vidharbha, 4,046 positive cases were reported after 833 positive cases in the first wave. This means a whopping surge of 398 per cent in the second wave in this badly-affected district.

Beed district comes second in terms of the highest surge in positive cases, which is 264 per cent. In the second wave, 11,177 positive cases were reported in this district. Last year in the first wave, this figure was a much more acceptable 3,067.



The districts of Amaravati, Wardha and Hingoli reported 218 per cent, 203 per cent and 203 per cent surge in positive cases in the second wave. Nanded is the only district that has reported a decline in positive cases in the second wave, which is of 52 per cent. In the second wave, 3,340 positive cases were reported. In the first wave that swept across the state last year, this figure in the district of Nanded was 6,998.

Nagpur has reported a 23 per cent surge in positive cases in the second wave, while Mumbai and Pune have reported 17 per cent and 16 per cent rise in the number of cases. Thane and Raigad distrcits have reported declines, of 18 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively, in the second wave.

Across the state of Maharashtra, Pune has the highest 17.18 per cent active positive cases. Thi is 7.57 per cent in Mumbai and 6.73 per cent in Thane. In case of Nagpur and Solapur, the numbers are 6.38 per cent and 4.80 per cent.

Maharashtra's Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Monday that the government was prepared, but did not anticipate the sheer scale of the second wave.

"However, the state government is fully prepared to tackle the third wave. We have also roped in 17,000 local family doctors who will treat patients in home quarantine. Besides, enhancing the production of oxygen and other medical equipment is also our priority," Thackeray said.

EXPRESS READ

Former Bihar CM's take on use of PM photo

Patna: Former chief minister of Bihar and founder president of Hindustani Awam Morcha, which is part of the state government, Jitan Ram Manjhi has created a stir. After demanding the President's photo on Covid-19 vaccination certificates, he said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo should be on death certificates also, if it is on the vaccination certificates.

Spouse of High Comm staff RT-PCR negative

New Delhi: The Indian High Commission in Islamabad on Monday clarified that an official's spouse, who had earlier tested positive for coronavirus, has tested negative in the RT-PCR test conducted upon arrival in Lahore. "The spouse of an official tested + for Covid on RAT, the said individual tested NEGATIVE for Covid on RT-PCR," the High Commission tweeted.

Jaishankar in US, talks on vax materials on the cards

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday reached the US for a five-day visit. He is likely to have discussions with his US counterpart Antony Blinken on securing vaccine ingredients.

Jaishankar, in the first leg of his visit, will meet UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in New York. This will be their first in-person meeting since India assumed a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council, for a two-year term beginning January 1.

The external affairs minister will proceed to Washington DC to hold discussions with Blinken. It will be the second meeting between them in less than a month. Jaishankar and Blinken had met on the sidelines of the G8 foreign ministers' meeting in London. It is expected that the minister will urge US to release raw materials for vaccines.

According to sources, of the 350 materials required for the production of Covid-19 vaccines, around 200 are sourced from the US. Production of Johnson & Johnson vaccines in India is also likely to be discussed. The decision to this effect was taken at the first ever summit of Quad leaders in March, 2021.

Jaishankar will also interact with representatives of US businesses which have led an initiative, supported by the Biden administration, to send assistance to India to combat the second covid-19 wave in India. It is likely that he will also meet representatives of Pfizer, a company that is in talks with the government to supply its vaccine to India. Reports have emerged which suggest that the two sides have not been able to reach an agreement on the indemnity clause.

Follow norms: Bihar forbids movement of ministers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Ranchi

IN a first such decision taken in Bihar during any crisis, the state government has asked ministers not to go on rounds of their constituencies, or to districts where they are the inspecting ministers, during the ongoing pandemic lockdown.

Movements of ministers are in violation of restrictions and also send a wrong message to the public. The Cabinet secretary of the state government has issued a notification to this effect. "The public will become less inclined to adhering to the restrictions of lockdown, which has been imposed in order to control the second wave of the pandemic," said the letter issued to principal secretaries of all the ministers.

The cabinet secretary's letter asks the ministers to postpone or avoid tours to their constituencies or districts under their charge. They have been suggested virtual modes of communication, if required, to review or carry out inspections.

The Opposition was quick to find faults with this decision. RJD leaders said that the state government has passed this order to prevent its leader Tejashwi Yadav from visiting the affected areas. Yadav had recently sought permission through a letter to the chief minister to allow him and his MLAs to visit their areas to serve the people.

EARTHQUAKE IN CHAMOLI

The residents of Chamoli in Uttarakhand were jolted out of their sleep in the early hours of Monday by an earthquake, measuring 4.3 on the Richter scale. There have been no reports of any loss of life or property

1 INJURED IN CRUDE BOMB ATTACK IN A U.P. VILLAGE

	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	40	27	Mumbai	32	28
Bhopal	40	26	Panaji	31	27
Jaipur	39	27	Patna	38	25
Amritsar	39	22	Lucknow	38	26
Chennai	36	28	Port Blair	28	24
Kolkata	35	27	Imphal	33	21
Srinagar	24	10	Chandigarh	38	23

Shah reviews cyclone preparation with Bengal, Odisha, Andhra CMs

Home minister urges state governments to evacuate people and protect oxygen plants

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

WITH Cyclone Yaas on course to hit India east coast on Wednesday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday held a meeting with chief ministers of West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

Shah asked the state governments to ensure that all people living near coastal areas are evacuated. The states have been asked to ensure that the cyclone does not damage the oxygen plants, many of which are located near coastal areas of these states.

Apart from CMs of the three states, the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands also took part in the virtual meet. Besides, officials from the ministries of Home Affairs, Health, Telecommunications, Road Transport and Highways, Petroleum and Natural Gas, members of the National Disaster Management Authority, were present in the high-level meeting.

Shah directed the officials to ensure that hospitals, Covid Care Centres, vaccination centres and testing labs located in areas that are in cyclone's predicted path are provided with sufficient resources including providing power back-up.

The officials were also asked to prepare "a buffer for medical oxygen supply in order to preempt any disruptions in the oxygen and vaccine supply-chain."

Shah said coordination of the relief efforts would be done through a 24X7 central control room.

Officials have been asked to disseminate cyclone-related alerts in local languages over mobile phones, television and social media.

The home minister also reviewed measures taken for the safety of all shipping and fishing vessels, and all ports and oil installations in the area. The home minister said the Indian Coast Guard, the Navy, the Army and Air Force units have been put on standby and surveillance aircraft and helicopters are carrying out aerial sorties.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday reviews preparedness to tackle Cyclone Yaas, which is forming in the Bay of Bengal | PTI

Mamata slams Centre over alleged bias in fund allocation

PRANAB MONDAL @Kolkata

WEST Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, in a virtual meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah over cyclone Yaas, criticised the Centre over alleged discrimination in giving financial assistance to states.

Mamata asked Shah why West Bengal, which has more population density than Andhra Pradesh or Odisha will get only ₹400 crore for handling the cyclone while the other two states have been sanctioned ₹600 crores each.

Shah reportedly told Mamata that the issue would be discussed later and the level of financial assistance was decided scientifically. "I have less knowledge of this science, but I understand political science better," she later told media.

Alleging discrimination, the chief minister said, "West Bengal is a much bigger state than Odisha. Bengal's population is also higher. The state had not received sufficient funds from the Centre to handle last year's cyclone Amphan. This year too, Bengal is being deprived of funds by the Centre as usual."

Sharpening her attacks on the Centre, she said, "The central government had promised financial help. Central teams visited the cyclone-ravaged areas. The Centre gave us only ₹1,000 crore, which was part of the state's dues from the Centre."

Farmers call off Hisar protests as demands met

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

A faceoff between farmers and Haryana Police in Hisar was averted on Monday after the district administration sat down for talks with an 11-member farmers' delegation and agreed to withdraw all criminal cases lodged against farmers, besides getting their vehicles, damaged by the police during protests, repaired.

The farmers, however, will be hoisting black flags at the Singhu and Tikri borders on Wednesday to mark six months of farmers' agitation against the Centre's three farm laws.

On May 16, farmers had clashed with the police before Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar was to visit Hisar to inaugurate a new Covid Care Centre. Several farmers and policemen were wounded in the clashes. The police had filed FIRs against some 350 farmers that day.

The farmer's delegation that held talks with the district administration on Monday was led by Rakesh Tikai, Gurman Singh Charuni and Joginder Singh Ugraha. "We are satisfied with the assurances given by the administration," Charuni said. According to sources, the administration has also accepted the farmers' demand that the government gives a job to a family member of Ram Chander, a farmer who died on Monday on the way to Hisar.

Earlier in the day, the authorities were on tenterhooks as thousands of farmers from Hisar and adjoining districts gathered in Hisar on Monday. The farmers had entered the town undeterred by a heavy police presence.

The mini secretariat and the residences of senior administration, police and judicial officials were sealed off by the police.

Haryana minister slams Opposition

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij on Monday slammed the state's opposition parties, saying they are 'not well-wishers of protesting farmers' and that had they been so they would have urged the protesters to take Covid-19 vaccines and tests.

WAR OF WORDS

Sena's Raut attacks Maha guv over delay in MLC appointments

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @Mumbai

SHIV Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Monday claimed Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Kosyari has lowered the dignity of the Governor's office by sitting on the recommendations for the appointment of 12 members of the legislative council for six months.

In an editorial on Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*, Sena MP Raut criticised Kosyari for his alleged objectionable conduct.

The article expressed astonishment over reports that after an RTI activist sought information on the appointment of 12 MLCs from Raj Bhavan, it was informed that they do not have any such information.

"It is quite surprising the Maharashtra cabinet approved the 12 names of MLCs, the list was submitted to the governor, and it was also reminded a couple of times about the list. Despite this, the governor's office says they do not know about the 12 names list recommended by the cabinet for MLCs appointment. It is surprising and raises many questions about the functioning of the governor's office," Samana said. "If the list is not with the governor's office, then the ghost has taken it. If it is so, then actions should be taken under superstition law that Maharashtra has approved long back," wrote Raut, adding that the governor should also carry out the Shanti Yadnya to vanquish the bad and superstitious spirit.

The editorial argued that if the governor had appointed these 12 MLCs, then the elected representatives would have been able to work more efficiently during the pandemic.

"The Bombay High Court had asked the Governor to submit an affidavit over delay in the appointment of 12 names as MLCs. We hope that after the court directions, the governor will work now rather stirring the unnecessary controversy for wrong reasons," Raut wrote.

ICCR to award desi restaurants abroad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

WITH a view to boost India's soft power, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is preparing to unveil "Annapurna Award" for Indian restaurants abroad that attract the highest number of local non-NRI customers.

The ICCR president Vinay Sahasrabuddhe said it was for the first time that culinary and cuisine traditions are figuring prominently on the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) agenda for the first time. Speaking at the fourth Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Memorial International Oration, the ICCR president quoted food historian Dr Collin Taylor Sen of Chicago, who had recognized India's culinary culture as soft power.

Indian restaurants are the major channels of evolution of a true people-to-people relationship, Saharabuddhe said.

"Culinary and cuisine traditions have figured prominently on ICCR agenda, for the first time. Indian restaurants are the major channels of evolution of a true people-to-people relationship," said Saharabuddhe. He announced that the ICCR centres abroad would be encouraged to conduct Indian Food Fests with lecture and demonstration sessions devoted to a regional food variety twice a year.

Speaking on the occasion through video conference, Sen said vegetarianism and Ayurveda-based food are two most significant contributions of India to the global food traditions. She further said, Indian restaurants abroad today range from storefront dhabas to Michelin-starred ones. After the oration, a panel discussion was also held involving Indian chefs and restaurateurs like Vineet Bhatia (London), Sarah Todd (Melbourne), Sanjoo Malhotra (Sweden) and Priya Paul (Chennai).

AAI reviews safety measures at airports

Dark clouds hover over Kolkata on Monday evening | PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

WHILE flight operations to and from airports in West Bengal and Odisha are likely to be affected by Cyclone Yaas, airports in Ranchi, Patna, Raipur, Jamshedpur, Bagdogra, Cooch Behar, Vizag, and Rajahmundry have also been put on alert.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) are closely monitoring the situation with regular review meetings. Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation on Monday chaired a meeting to take stock of the preparedness at the airports that are likely to be impacted by the cyclone. The virtual meeting was attended by Sanjeev Kumar, Chairman of the Airports Authority of India.

Keeping the safety of airport infrastructure, human resource, and flight operations in mind, airports have been advised to 'anticipate, plan and protect', the AAI said. Secretary (Civil Aviation) has instructed the concerned airports to put in place all preventive measures to minimize any damage.

The AAI and the Indian Meteorological Department are constantly monitoring the situation at all airports in southern and eastern India.

Heavy rain and winds of 20-25 knots gusting up to 35 knots forced scheduled civil flight operations to be suspended at Port Blair Airport on Monday.

EXPRESS READ

Himanta defends cow protection ill

Guwahati: Defending the proposed cow protection bill in Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the ruling BJP on Monday said beef should not be consumed in places where Hindus live and the bovine is worshipped. During a discussion on the motion of thanks on the Governor's address in Assam Assembly, the opposition AIUDF feared that the propsed bill will encourage incidents of mob lynching. "We believe that cow is our mother. We want that beef is not consumed in those places where cows are worshipped," he said.

Poll violence: 2K lawyers write to CJI

New Delhi: More than 2,000 women lawyers from across the country wrote to Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana on Monday urging him to take cognisance of alleged post poll violence in West Bengal and constitute a Special Investigation Team to register FIRs and investigation into the matter. The letter signed by 2,093 women advocates, including from West Bengal, claimed that the post poll violence continuing since May 2 in the state has not even spared women and children.

Medical team attacked in MP during jab drive

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

RESISTANCE to Covid-19 vaccination in rural areas of Madhya Pradesh has taken a violent turn.

A team of medical workers led by a tehsildar, which went to Malikhedi village of Ujjain district on Monday to motivate villagers to take Covid vaccination, was attacked by members of the Pardi community. One of the team members, who is the husband of a woman panchayat office-bearer, sustained head injuries in the attack. Others quickly got in their vehicle and left the spot. According to sources, as the tehsildar and other team members were talking to the villagers, a group of more than 50 men, armed with rods and swords reached the spot and started threatening the team.

"Before we could understand anything, the villagers started attacking us. While the tehsildar and others managed to escape, I sustained a head injury," said Shakil Mohammad, who was injured.

CBI MOVES S.C. CHALLENGING HOUSE ARREST OF TMC MLAs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday moved the Supreme Court, challenging the order of the Calcutta High Court that placed three TMC MLAs accused in the Narada sting operation case under house arrest.

A division bench of the Calcutta High Court had referred their bail plea to a larger bench after the two-judge bench, comprising Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Justice Arijit Banerjee, disagreed on the grant of interim bail to the four accused.

While one of the judges had opined that the four should be released on interim bail, the other opined that they should remain in judicial custody.

Hence, as an interim measure, the division bench directed that the four TMC leaders be placed under house arrest, in terms of the order outlined by the Supreme Court in the case of Gautam Navlakha in the Bhima Koregaon matter.

West Bengal Transport Minister Firhad Hakim, Panchayat Minister Subrata Mukherjee, Trinamool Congress MLA Madan Mitra and former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterjee were arrested by the CBI last Monday.

Meanwhile, the Calcutta High Court on Monday took up hearing in the Narada sting tapes case refusing a prayer by the CBI to adjourn the matter.

Representing the Central Bureau of Investigation, Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta prayed before the five-judge bench that it adjourn hearing in the case, as the investigating agency has filed a special leave petition (SLP) before the Supreme Court, in connection with the high court's May 19 and May 21 orders.

The five-judge bench of the high court, however, decided to commence hearing in the matter since the SLP is yet to be listed for hearing before the apex court.

It heard the CBI plea for transfer of the case from lower court to high court, and applications filed by the accused for recall of the stay order the high court had given on a lower court ruling.

IAS officer finally gets central deputation

A 1999-batch Chhattisgarh cadre IAS officer Sonmoni Borah, whose central deputation was put on hold due to the pandemic and some administrative reasons, has now taken charge as a joint secretary in the Land Resources Department under the Ministry of Rural Development. The Land Resources Department manages the PM Krishi Sinchai Yojana, the Neeranchal National Watershed Project and the digitisation of land records. Borah has had a successful stint as the secretary of various departments of the Chhattisgarh government. He has also served as collector in five districts of the state and as secretary to the Governor. Recipient of national award twice for MNREGA, Borah is known for his skills in managing rural and urban affairs, women empowerment and housing and habitat issues.

EJAZ KAISER
Our correspondent in Chhattisgarh
ejaz@newindianexpress.com

RAIPUR DIARY

Sambit Patra seeks more time to appear before police

BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra has sought more time to appear before the Chhattisgarh police for questioning. In an email sent by Patra's legal counsel to the Raipur police, the senior BJP leader said he won't be able to appear at the civil lines police station on May 24 as scheduled. The police had asked him to come to the station personally or through video conferencing and cooperate with the investigation into the controversial 'Congress toolkit' case. An FIR was lodged against former chief minister Raman Singh and Patra under the Indian Penal Code Sections 504, 469 and 188 at the Raipur police station, following complaints lodged by National Students' Union of India and the Youth Congress.

70 inmates of Raipur Central Jail to get job as prison guards

For the first time, as many as 70 prisoners of the Raipur Central Jail will be employed as jail guards. The jail administration is providing them with necessary training, including on handling jail security, duties and responsibilities of guards, maintaining records, precautions to be taken and ensuring their physical fitness. They have all been enrolled for a degree course in the Raipur branch of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). They will appear for the IGNOU examination in June this year.

Raipur MLA reviews development projects

Congress MLA Satyanarayan Sharma has been conducting extensive fieldwork in his Raipur City Gramin constituency. In his interactions with officials, he has stressed that the pandemic should not hamper developmental works. Officials have been instructed to adopt a plan of action to tackle the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Sharma reviewed the rural development programmes and the functioning of the rural health care system and the Jalvardhan Yojana. He urged the people to help reduce the spread of the disease by following Covid-19 guidelines.

Biden sends US secretary of state to Middle East after Gaza ceasefire

Blinken will travel to Jerusalem, Ramallah, Cairo and Amman, meet Israeli PM and others

WASHINGTON

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Monday asked his top diplomat **Antony Blinken** to travel to the Middle East to meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders, among other regional leaders, and advance the peace process, amid a ceasefire between the two sides.

"Following up on our quiet, intensive diplomacy to bring about a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, I have asked Antony Blinken to travel to the Middle East this week. During his trip, he will meet with Israeli leaders about our ironclad commitment to Israel's security," Biden said in a statement. "He will continue our Administration's efforts to rebuild ties to, and support for, the Palestinian people and leaders, after years of neglect. He will engage other key partners in the region, including

on the coordinated international effort to ensure immediate assistance reaches Gaza in a way that benefits the people there and not Hamas, and on reducing the risk of further conflict in the coming months,' said the president.

Blinken will travel to Jerusalem, Ramallah, Cairo and Amman through Thursday and meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah, the State Department said. His trip comes days after the announcement of Egypt-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian factions in Gaza Strip.

> **During his trip, Blinken will meet with Israeli leaders about our ironclad commitment to Israel's security. He will continue our Administration's efforts to rebuild ties to, and support for, the Palestinian people and leaders, after years of neglect**
>
> Joe Biden, US President

"In the wake of the ceasefire, Secretary Blinken will be travelling to Israel and the West Bank today and tomorrow, where he'll meet with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. He'll then move on to Egypt and Jordan, where he'll meet with leaders there to discuss recovery efforts and a means of working together to build better futures for people here on the ground and in the region,' a senior State Department official told reporters.

"We are incredibly relieved at the terrible violence which tore apart the lives of so many innocents has ended, and we're committed to supporting all efforts to a lasting peace,' the official said.

Blinken looks forward to meeting regional leaders and discussing how the US can support Israelis and Palestinians to rebuild and address the underlying causes that led to this crisis, and by advancing equal measures of freedom, security, and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike in tangible ways, said the official, who interacted with reporters on conditions of anonymity. Responding to a question, the official said that the US does not want to see a return to the bloodshed that was heartbreaking during the 11-day conflict. *PTI*

ASIA MATTERS

PAKISTAN

Baloch militant planning to target transmission tower arrested

Lahore: Security forces on Monday arrested a militant from the banned separatist group Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) for allegedly planning to target a power transmission line tower in Punjab province. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) team received information that a militant, later identified as Ibrahim alias Japani alias Khabri, from the separatist group was present in the area of Asni in Rajanpur and was planning to target a 500 KV tower of Wapda High Power transmission lines, a CTD spokesperson said. Some 5.43 kg of explosive material, primacord 2xf, safety fuse 10fx3 inch N.E detonators, one Kalashnikov with 24 bullets have been recovered from him, the statement said and added that "terror financing" amount PKR 2,92,000 has also been recovered from him. PTI

INDONESIA

Foreigners arrested for alleged drug possession

Denpasar: A British hotel owner and an Italian tourist have been arrested for alleged possession of narcotics on Indonesia's resort island of Bali, police said Monday. Kenneth Daniel Kutsch, a British man who has a hotel business on neighbouring Lombok island, and his Indonesian partner, Ni Ketut Dewi Seniwati, were arrested in the parking lot of a restaurant in Bali on May 7 after residents reported narcotic deals in the area, police said. AP

THAILAND

Thai villages isolated after variant found amid vaccine worry

Bangkok: Thailand placed barbed wire and checkpoints in several southern villages along the Malaysian border on Monday after identifying a cluster of infections with a Covid variant that's believed to spread faster. The lockdown came as Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha sought to assure people that his government could manage a recent surge as it is set to start a national vaccination campaign next month. "Please understand that we can manage this," Prayuth said as he received the second dose of his coronavirus vaccine. Also on Monday, the agency managing Thailand's coronavirus response reported 2,713 new cases and 30 more deaths. It raised the nation's totals to 132,213 cases and 806 deaths. AP

Who reads your news? Pope to Vatican journos

ROME

POPE FRANCIS challenged the Vatican's in-house journalists on Monday to essentially justify their continued work, asking them how many people actually consume their news in a critique of the office that costs the Holy See more than all its embassies around the world combined.

Francis visited the Dicastry of Communications, Vatican Radio and the headquarters of the Vatican's newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, which is marking its 160th anniversary. He appeared to use the occasion to lay down the gauntlet at a fraught financial time for the Holy See.

Facing a major pension funding shortage and a projected 50 million euro (USD 61 million) deficit this year, Francis has ordered salary cuts from 3 per cent to 10 per cent for Vatican employees, both lay and religious, and paused seniority bonuses for two years.

Francis has vowed not to fire anyone to offset the economic crisis created by Covid. But in a warning of sorts to the Vatican communications staff, he opened his unscripted remarks on Monday with a pointed question.

'There are a lot of reasons to be worried about the Radio, L'Osservatore, but one that touches my heart: How many people listen to the Radio? How many read L'Osservatore Romano?' Francis asked.

He said their work was good, their offices nice, but that there was a 'danger' that their work doesn't arrive where it is supposed to. AP

Rescuers work by the wreckage of a cable car after it collapsed near the summit of Stresa-Mottarone line in Piedmont region, northern Italy, on Sunday | AP/PTI

Italy investigators probe why cable car brake 'didn't work'

STRESA (ITALY)

THE investigation into Italy's cable car disaster that killed 14 people will focus on why the lead cable snapped and why the emergency brake didn't engage and prevent the cabin from careening back down the mountain until it pulled off the support line and crashed to the ground, the lead prosecutor said Monday.

Verbania Prosecutor Olimpia Bossi outlined the contours of her investigation based on what she said was objective, empirical fact of what occurred: "The brakes of the security system didn't work. Otherwise the cabin would have stopped," she said.

"Why that happened is under investigation." Bossi spoke to reporters as the lone survivor of Sunday's horrific tragedy, a 5-year-old Israeli boy living in Italy, remained hospitalised in Turin in intensive care with multiple broken bones.

The Israeli foreign ministry identified him as Eitan Biran. His parents, younger brother and two great-grandparents were among the dead, the ministry said. Italian media identified all the other victims as residents of Italy.

The disaster, in the Mottarone mountaintop overlooking Lake Maggiore and other lakes near Switzerland, once again raised questions about the quality and safety of Italy's transport infrastructure.

Transport Minister Enrico Giovannini visited the site Monday and announced a commission of inquiry to investigate the 'technical and organizational causes' of the disaster, while prosecutors will focus on any criminal blame.

The transport ministry said a preliminary check of the cable line's safety and maintenance record show that the whole lift structure underwent a renovation in August 2016, and that a full maintenance check was performed in 2017 and more inspections last year.

The mayor of Stresa, Marcella Severino, quoted witnesses as saying they heard a 'loud hiss," apparently when the lead cable snapped. *AP*

EXPRESS READ

Rocket hits near Iraqi air base hosting US troops

Baghdad: A single rocket struck close to a military base hosting US troops in western Iraq on Monday without causing any injuries, a spokesman for the US-led coalition said. The rocket struck near Ain al-Asad air base in Anbar province at 1:35pm, Col. Wayne Marotto said on Twitter. He said damages were being assessed and an investigation was launched. AP

Samoa in constitutional crisis as elected leader locked out of Parl

WELLINGTON

SAMOA was plunged into a constitutional crisis on Monday when the woman who won an election last month was locked out of Parliament and the previous leader claimed he remained in charge. The fast-moving events marked the latest twist in a bitter power struggle that has been playing out in the small Pacific nation since it elected its first female leader. Not only is Samoa's peace and stability at stake, but also its relationship with China.

On Monday morning, Prime Minister-elect Fiame Naomi Mata'afa and her supporters showed up at parliament to form a new government, but were not allowed inside. She and her FAST Party later took oaths and appointed ministers in a ceremony held under a tent in front of the locked Parliament, actions that opponents said were illegal.

The nation's Supreme Court had ordered the Parliament to convene. And the constitution requires that lawmakers meet within 45 days of an election, with Monday marking the final day. But Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, who was PM for 22 years before his unexpected election loss, doesn't appear ready to give up power.

Samoa's PM-elect Fiame Naomi Mata'afa talks to reporters outside parliament house in Apia, Samoa, on Monday | AP/PTI

Two powerful allies have been supporting Tuilaepa.

The nation's head of state, Tuimalealiifano Va'aletoa Sualauvi II, wrote in a proclamation last week that he was suspending Parliament 'for reasons that I will make known in due course."

After Fiame was locked out on Monday, Tuilaepa held a news conference proclaiming his government remained in charge. *AP*

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that, my client intends to purchase the Schedule Property from its owners, Sri. P.R. Sathyanarayana Setty (S/o late Pamadi Ramachandra Setty), his wife Smt. P.S.Aruna Kumari and children namely, Sri. Kiran S Pamadi, Smt.Anushree Balram & Smt. Nagashree.G.R, residing at No.111, Surveyor Street, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004.

Apart from the aforesaid owners, if any other person/s, have any manner of right, title, interest or claim or charge or lien over the Schedule property or otherwise have any lawful objection/s for sale of the Schedule property by the aforesaid owners, they are hereby called upon to file their objections in writing, along with the photocopies of documents on which they rely, with the undersigned, within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objection/s received thereafter will not be binding on my client.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property **(Gopi Agencies)** bearing Municipal No.54, PID No.46-3-54, measuring East to West 30 ft and North to South 108 ft, with a building thereon, situated at Albert Victor Road, Chamarajapet, Bangalore-560018 and bounded on:

East by : Private Property
West by : Private Property
North by : Albert Victor Road
South by : Conservancy.

Sd/- S.F. Goutam Chand
Advocate
Goutam Associates
No.60, 2nd Floor, Kanakapura Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru–560 004

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client **Mr. Hareesha. T,** S/o. Thyagaraju Reddy and **Smt. C.V. Lakshmi,** W/o. Mr. Hareesha. T, Both R/a. No. 35, 3rd Cross, Near L.G. Food Road, Thavarekere Main Road, Bangalore-560 029 intends to purchase below mentioned Schedule Property from its absolute owner S. Subhashini, W/o. Babu Jayaram, D/o. Sri. H. Srinivasa Reddy R/a. Halanayakanahalli, Carmelaram Post, Bangalore-560 035. such of those person/s who are having any right, title, interest and/or any claim in and over the said property may lodge their claims if any with under signed along with relevant documents within **7 days,** failing which my clients shall proceed to purchase as if no claims' forth coming and it is deemed free from all encumbrances'. No claims are entertained beyond time prescribed.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing **No. 715,** formed by Bangalore Development Authority, situated at **Hosur-Sarjapura Road Layout, Sector-2, Bangalore**

Measuring:
East to West : 40' feet / 12.19 mtrs
North to South : 60' feet / 18.29 mtrs
Totally measuring : **2400 sq.ft**
and bounded on :
East : Additional Site, **West** : Site No. 716,
North : Road, **South** : Site No. 711.

Sunitha. M, Advocate
M/s. SM Advocates, No. 75, 6th Block Jayanagar, Opp. Yediyur Ganesha Temple, Bangalore-560070
Ph: 7760777755 / 9742619477
Dated : 25-05-2021 Bangalore

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Demand Notice

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

The undersigned is the Authorized Officer of Edelweiss Retail Finance Limited (ERFL) under Securitization And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorized Officer has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to ERFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the Loan Agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the Loan, the following Assets have been mortgaged to ERFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrower(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
1.	(Loan No: LBANSLE0000014713) Lalit Jain (Borrower) Nirmal Kumar Tejraj Bantia (Co- Borrower) Penguins Promo Products Pvt Ltd (Co- Borrower)	08/04/2021 of Rs. 1,62,98,954.26/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Two Lakhs Ninety Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Four and Twenty Six Paisa)	All that Piece and Parcel of Property measuring super build area 1700 sq. ft. comprising of entire Second Floor along with executive use of Terrace area measuring 559.5 ft., bearing **Units Nos. 201, 202 & 203, 2nd Floor, Madison Complex, Jeevan Bhima Nagar, Municipal No. 1/2, Ward No.74, Pid No. 74-14-1/2, Kodihalli Main Road, Bangalore - 560075. Boundary Details:** North: Propert belonging to Mr. Venkateshappa. South: Road. East: Kodihalli Road. West: Propert belonging to Mr. Lakshmajah Reddy.

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to ERFL as previously mentioned, ERFL shall proceed against the above-secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the previously mentioned assets, whether by way of Sale, Lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of ERFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date: May 25, 2021
Place: Bangalore

Sd/-
(Authorized Officer)
For ERFL Finance Limited

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CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I **Tejaswini H.M,** W/o Paramesha S.V. Aged about 38 years, residing at No.11, Madilu, 1st Main Road, 5th Cross, Brundavana Nagar, kariobanahalli, Bangalore-73. have changed name to **Tejaswini Paramesha S.V,** vide affidavit dated 21/04/2021, Sworn before Notary K.Venkateshan Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Venisha .K D/o. Kasper A, aged about 25 years, R/at No. 400, 2nd Main, 7th Cross, Bangarappa Nagar, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore-560098. Hear by declare to change my name VENISHA.K instead of Venitia.K. Vide affidavit dated 17-05-2021 sworn before notary, V. Srinivasa Reddy, Bengaluru,

QuoteExpress

ONE BOOK, ONE PEN, ONE CHILD, AND ONE TEACHER CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited

(Erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)
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Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031. | **Tel :** +91 44 4564 4000 | **Fax:** +91 44 4564 4022

IDFC FIRST Bank

Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)** The loans of the below-mentioned borrowers and co- borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loan were classified as NPA as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)** are mentioned as per respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates.

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Name of borrowers and co-borrowers	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice	Property Address
1	21295521 & 21298465	Home Loan	1. Mr. Madhu T A 2. Mrs. Priyanka S J	19.04.2021	INR 6546420.16/-	**All The Piece and Parcel of** Immovable Property Being Vacant Residential Site No. 741, Intermediate, Bbmp Pid No. 39-202-741, In The Layout Known As ITI HBCS Layout, Formed By The Iti Employees Housing Co Operative Society Ltd., Situated at Nayadahalli Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru Mahanagra Palike, Chandra Layout Ward, Measuring East to West: 40 Feet, North To South: 30 Feet, and Totally Measuring 1200 Square Feet, Together With All Rights, Appurtenances Whatsoever Underneath or Above The Surface Is Bounded As: North : Site No. 742, South : Site No. 740, East : Road, West: Site No. 732.
2	21284496	Home Loan	1. Mruthyunjaya 2. Anitha M Bhat 3. Shatnayu Ayurveda (P) Ltd.	20.04.2021	INR 1,95,77,533.63/-	**All That Piece and Parcel of** Property Bearing Site No. 578 Situated at Vishweshwaraiah Nagar (Gangenahalli) Layout, Formed By The HMT Employees Co-Operative House Building Society Limited, Consisting of 1000 Square Ft of Residential Building, Presently Comes Under The Revenue Administrative Jurisdiction of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Ward No. 20, Bangalore, Site Measuring East To West: 50 Feet, North To South: 30 Feet and Admeasuring 1500 Sft., and Bounded As: North: Site No 577, East: Road, South: Site No 579, West: Site No 603.
3	21296560	Home Loan	1. Shwetha N R 2. Kiran P	19.04.2021	INR 3165455.55/-	**All The Piece and Parcel of** Flat Bearing No. A-209, Khatha No.1117/148/3 & E-Khatha No.150300401000120676 of "A" Wing in Second Floor, Measuring 1065 Sq Feet Super Built Up Area Containing Two Bedroom Together With RCC Roofing, Vitrified Flooring, One Common Toilet and one attached Toilet, one Hall, one Kitchen, Together With one Covered Car Parking Space 540.22 Sq. Feet, Undivided interest and including Proportionate Share in Common Areas Such As Passages, Lobbies, Staircase, Contained in The Multistoried Building Known As "Nisarga Capital Apartments" Constructed in Converted Sy.no. 148/3 of Kannuralli Village, Hosakote Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and Bounded As:East: Nisarga Capital Block B Apartment, West: 2 MTR Wide Corridors, North: 2 Mtr Wide Corridors, South: Flat Bearing Number A-210.
4	19894732	Loan Against Property	1. Girish G 2. Radhamma Gopal	15.04.2021	INR 1997207.14/-	**All That Piece And Parcel of** Property Bearing Site No. 35/1, Measuring 15 (east To West) X 34 Ft. (north To South), Situated In Sigasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Banglore, South Taluk, Bbmp Ward No. 191, Karnataka - 560068,and Bounded As : North: Road, West:Remaining Portion of Property, South:12 Ft Road, East: Property of Sarojamma.

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts to **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)** as per the details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc., within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings, under Section 13 (4) and section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereinabove to realize the amount due to **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited) .** Further you are prohibited under Section 13 (13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured assets either by way of sale/lease or otherwise.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
IDFC First Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)

Date : 25.05.2021
Place : Bangalore

Market Watch

MARKET			GOLD			SILVER			FOREX		
111.42 ▲	Sensex	50,651.90	₹0 ⇔	24 carat (1 gm)	₹4,700	₹300 ▲	Per kg	₹71,500	▲	Dollar	72.96
22.40 ▲	Nifty	15,197.70	₹0 ⇔	22 carat (1 gm)	₹4,600	₹0.30 ▲	Per gm	₹71.50	▲	Euro	89.08

Protracted lockdowns drag biz resumption

Nomura India Business Resumption Index slipped to 60 for the week ended May 23, down from 63 a week ago

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

WITH back-to-back lockdowns in various states denting business activities, the worst hit to the Indian economy will manifest in May, Japanese brokerage Nomura said on Monday.

Already, the pace of India's business activity resumption has dropped drastically to levels last seen in June 2020 after having fully recovered in February.

The Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI), which tracks a weekly dashboard to capture a host of ultra high-frequency data, fell to 60 for the week ended May 23 from 63 a week ago.

Google's workplace and retail & recreation mobility indices fell by 5-6 percentage points week-on-week. Power demand continued to contract, down by 5%. Labour participation rate moderated to 39.4% from 40.5%, with the unemployment rate perked up to 14.7% from 14.4% last week.

The index curve has been on a downward trajectory since fresh lockdowns were imposed across states. With restrictions extended through May-end in most states, economists believe that a sequential improvement in activity is likely in June.

> We continue to project a localised hit to GDP growth in Q2 (-3.8% q-o-q and 28.8% y-o-y), while medium-term tailwinds like the vaccine pivot, a global recovery and easy financial conditions should support growth of 9.8% in 2021
>
> Nomura

"Both mobility and non-mobility sectors have been hit. Lockdowns look to spill into June, but a few states are announcing a slow rollback of restrictions as their virus caseloads fall, which suggests a sequential improvement in activity in June," said Sonal Verma and Aurodeep Nandi, economists at Nomura.

Rolling out state-wide lockdowns appears to be moderating caseloads, but the second wave has unleashed a devastating human cost. International experience, however, suggests GDP growth is less sensitive to lower mobility during the second wave.

Nomura expects the impact of second Covid wave on the economy to be limited to the first quarter of this fiscal year, unlike the first wave, which pushed the country into a rare recession.

Meanwhile, a section of economists have warned that if the localised restrictions continue for another month, there could be further downside risks in GDP growth.

Recently, Crisil said its 11% growth forecast for FY22 faces downside risks. If the second wave peaks by May-end, FY22 growth could drop to 9.8% and more sharply to 8.2% if it happens only by June-end.

S&P Global Ratings says the second wave "may derail a strong recovery in the economy and credit conditions".

Aviation sector in a huge mess, early recovery unlikely

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

FROM 3 lakh passengers a day in mid-February, the average number of daily flyers has now fallen below 50,000, highlighting the extent of damage caused by second Covid-19 wave on the country's aviation sector.

According to data from the Airports Authority of India and ICRA Research, the average daily number of departing passengers in March 2021 stood at 2.49 lakh and declined by 28% month-on-month in April 2021 to 1.79 lakh. There was a further dip of 56% from May 1 to May 16, compared to the average of April 2021. For the week ended May 23, the average number of daily flyers stood at just 49,000.

"In addition to passengers being apprehensive about air travel, increase in infections forced many state governments to implement strict Covid-19 restrictions during last two months on air travel. The second wave of Covid-19 infections is likely to delay recovery in traffic," said Shubham Jain, senior vice-president (corporate ratings), at ICRA. He added, "The passenger traffic growth is now estimated at 80-85% in FY22 against earlier projection of 130-135%."

The rating agency expects domestic air travel to recover to pre-Covid levels by FY23 and international by FY24.

Aviation consultant firm CAPA says the crisis in the Indian aviation sector caused by the second wave has reached a "point of no return".

To survive the pandemic, a few airlines have taken the radical route of cutting and deferring salaries of its workforce.

SpiceJet has deferred up to 50% of the April salary of a significant section of employees. Some other airlines are also continuing with salary cuts it had implemented last year.

On Sunday, SpiceJet chairman and managing director Ajay Singh told his staff that this year has been especifically difficult. While greeting his employees as the airline completed 16 years, Singh noted that India is battling a brutal second wave of the pandemic and the aviation sector is flying at less than 10% of its pre-covid capacity, hinting that recovery will take more time than earlier thought.

POWER DEAL

JSPL reviews terms of JPL sale amid calls for more clarity

JONATHAN ANANDA @ Chennai

SEVERAL aspects of Jindal Steel and Power Ltd's (JSPL) proposal to sell subsidiary Jindal Power Ltd (JPL) to a company owned by its promoter group have come under criticism, not least of which is the valuation at which it is to be sold. Having already postponed the EGM scheduled to vote on the matter and announced that it is re-examining the deal, JSPL on Monday said the valuation was arrived at through a "competitive and comprehensive process", including two independent valuations and inputs from potential bidders.

But Shriram Subramanian, MD of shareholder advisory firm InGovern (which had recommended that shareholders vote against the deal), said that the company should release those valuation reports to shareholders and "be transparent" about the transactions.

JSPL's board had decided in April this year to sell its 96.42% stake in JPL to Worldone Pvt, a firm owned by its promoters, for ₹3,015 crore cash. The deal also included the conversion of capital advances and deposits of ₹4,386 crore made by JPL to JSPL into unsecured debt. Both aspects of the deal have raised questions.

JSPL reiterated on Monday that it is re-examing the deal after investors "requested... to examine and simplify certain terms" around the divestment and said it is "working on simplifying terms according to feedback.

Lack of info on capital advances, says InGovern

Flagging lack of information on JPL's capital advances of ₹2,854 crore made towards two of JSPL's captive power plant, InGovern said, "It is not clear as to the status of the transaction by JPL to acquire the captive power plants of JSPL for which these capital advances were made."

Jaypee Infratech creditors defer voting on Suraksha Realty's offer

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE resolution to Jaypee Infratech insolvency case has been further delayed as the Committee of Creditors (CoC) has deferred the voting on resolution plan of Suraksha Realty Ltd along with Lakshdeep Investments and Finance Pvt Ltd. The voting on the resolution plan was scheduled to begin on Monday, but it has now been deferred after NBCC requested the CoC to give it time to revise its resolution plan.

While the CoC has not agreed to allow only NBCC to revise its plan, it has decided to vote on May 27 and 28 to decide whether both the resolution applicants be given more time to revise their bids.

According to sources closed to the development, NBCC, which earlier emerged as the successful resolution applicant, had requested the CoC to allow it to revise its resolution plan. While a section of the CoC wanted to give NBCC another opportunity to revise its bid for Jaypee Infratech, but given the sensitivity of the matter and thousand of home buyers' interest at stake, some members of the CoC were of the opinion that giving another opportunity to the resolution applicants to revise their bid should be decided by vote.

So, the CoC would vote on May 27 and 28 to decide if both Suraksha and NBCC be given another opportunity to revise their plans. If the CoC votes in favour of giving them another opportunity, then they would be given seven days to revise the plan or else they would vote on Suraksha's resolution plan.

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

Current Price ₹109.40
Target Price ₹152

INDIAN OIL

IOCL reported a beat on EBITDA, driven by better-than-expected reported GRM ($10.6/bbl), marketing margins (₹6.1/lit), and petchem margins (EBITDA/mt of $419). In line with the company guidance, we believe the lifting of the Covid lockdowns across the globe would boost demand, driving an uptrend in GRM

—Motilal Oswal Financial Services

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *TNIE*

Edtech sector set to grow despite raging pandemic

BISMAH MALIK @ Bengaluru

WHILE the pandemic hit several other sectors, the online learning space in India witnessed a $2 billion funding in 2020, according to a report by Research firm Tracxn. Market leaders including Byju's, Unacademy and upGrad have attracted investments from global PE/ VC funds and gone on to acquire smaller firms which either have a specialised tech product or service offering, leading to further consolidation within the sector. India's edtech sector is expected to be $30 billion market size by 2030.

> **Bright future**
>
> Edtech has matured since the onset of Covid pandemic and this is expected to continue this year as well, said Siddharth Maheshwari, co-founder, Newton School

As Covid-induced lockdown continues, the demand for online learning is set to grow further. Industry leaders say the edtech boom will continue in 2021 despite the economy on a backtrack due to rising Covid cases.

On Monday, upGrad announced acquisition of Bengaluru-based video learning platform Impartus for ₹150 crore. UpGrad, which enables upskilling of professionals/ civil services aspirants through remote learning courses is now aiming to venture into K-12 online education space through this acquisition putting it at loggerheads with Byju's, which now commands a valuation of over $15 billion.

With this acquisition, upGrad, which predominantly focuses on working professionals, will now be able to strengthen its presence among higher educationinstitutions and learners, which is a ₹560 billion market, the company said.

Another major player, Unacademy, also expanded its target and acquired six miche firms last year as well as secured SoftBank Vision Fund's Vision Fund 2 funding to turn into a unicorn.

The $1 billion acquisition of Aakash Educational Services by Byju's – India's largest edtech firm – in April paved the way for the integration of technology channels and physical learning resources.

Market cap of BSE listed firms hits $3-tn mark

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) on Monday said the cumulative market capitalisation of all the listed companies on its platform has hit the $3-trillion mark for the first time.

"Market capitalization of equities of listed companies on @BSEIndia reached $3 trillion intra day for the first time ever. A great milestone on a long journey. Congratulations to all 6.9 crore+ registered investors, 1400+ brokers, 69,000+ MF distributors and 4700+ companies," Ashishkumar Chauhan, CEO of BSE, said in a tweet.

This coveted feat was achieved after the 30-stock index zoomed 2,000 points in the last seven sessions amid falling Covid-19 cases in India from as the second Covid wave seems to be ebbing.

On Friday alone, the Sensex closed 975 points higher at 50,540 and Nifty rose 269 points to 15,175.

Investor wealth has been touching new highs this year despite the economy registering a big fall last year and facing a brutal second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, which is still wreaking havoc on the economy. BSE's market cap had hit the ₹200 lakh crore mark for the first time ever on February 4, 2021. At present, the market wealth on BSE stands at ₹218.97 lakh crore.

The present surge also comes even as foreign institutional investors have become net sellers. According to data available, foreign portfolio investors withdrew ₹6,370 crore from equities and pumped in ₹1,926 crore in the debt segment between May 1 and 21, 2021.

India Cements' Q4 net profit back in the black on better prices, cost control

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

INDIA Cements has delivered a robust full year as well as fourth-quarter earnings on the back of sustained cost control measures and better cement prices even as the factory operated only at 50% capacity the whole of last year.

The Chennai-based company reported a net profit of ₹72 crore compared with a net loss of ₹111 crore in the year-ago period. Revenue rose to ₹1,450 crore as against ₹1,152 crore during the same quarter last fiscal while EBITDA, a metric used to evaluate operating performance, stood significantly higher at ₹213 crore when compared with ₹85 crore in March 2020 quarter.

For the full year 2020-21, the company registered a net profit of ₹222 crore as against a net loss of ₹36 crore in the previous fiscal. Revenue stood at ₹4,437 crore as against ₹5057 crore in FY20. Better net plant realisation (up 16 per cent) coupled with reduction in fixed cost made up the shortfall in cement sales. In FY21, total volume of clinker and cement fell 19 per cent at 89.02 lakh tonnes as against 110.22 lakh tons in FY20.

Elevated raw material prices, however, remain a concern and the company is likely to hike prices in the coming months. "We have already increased cement prices by about ₹10 per bag, in May and June also we may see an increase of ₹10-15 per bag," said N Srinivasan, vice-chairman & MD of India Cements.

EXPRESS READ

BBB recommends Shanti Lal Jain as Indian Bank MD & CEO

New Delhi: The Banks Board Bureau (BBB) on Monday recommended Shanti Lal Jain as the new managing director and chief executive officer of Chennai-headquartered Indian Bank. Soma Sankara Prasad has been named as the candidate on the reserve list for the role. The BBB made the recommendations after holding interviews with nine candidates from various public sector banks

FDI jumps 19% to $59.64 bn in 2020-21

New Delhi: Foreign direct investments (FDI) into the country grew 19 per cent to USD 59.64 billion during 2020-21 on account of measures taken by the government on the fronts of policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business, the commerce and industry ministry said on Monday. Total FDI, including equity, re-invested earnings and capital, rose 10% to the "highest ever" of $81.72 billion during 2020-21 against $74.39 billion in 2019-20

Bank credit grows 6%, deposits 9.8%

Mumbai: Bank credit grew 6.02% to ₹108.69 lakh crore and deposits increased by 9.87% to ₹152.17 lakh crore in the fortnight ended May 7, 2021, RBI data showed. In the fortnight ended May 8, 2020, bank advances stood at ₹102.52 lakh crore and deposits at ₹138.50 lakh crore, according to RBI's Scheduled Banks' Statement of Position in India as on May 07, 2021, released on Monday. Bank credit had grown by 5.71% and deposits by 10.28% in previous fortnight

TEPID DEMAND

Second Covid wave heralds another washout summer for India's consumer durables biz

SESA SEN @ New Delhi

WHITE goods makers are bracing for a second lost summer with resurgence in infections, state-wide lockdowns and rebound hopes increasingly challenged by a hobbled Covid-19 vaccine rollout. Industry executives say that sales have crashed to near-zero levels in April and May so far and most companies have either partially restricted production catering only to exports or shut down their plants completely.

"Air-conditioners and refrigerators saw strong volume growth in March and early April. Then, with stiff business and movement curbs introduced across states and just 10-12% of the markets now open, the current consumption is less than five per cent," said Kamal Nandi, business head and executive vice-president, Godrej Appliances.

April is a crucial month in the annual calendar for the ₹50,000 crore domestic appliances industry, since it kicks off their summer season sales, contributing close to 40 per cent of sales in the June quarter.

This year, the industry is likely to see only 22% of the sales in Q1, a drop of close to 50%, said Nandi, who is also the president of industry body Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association (CEAMA).

Manish Sharma, President and CEO of Panasonic India and South Asia, also expects the summer sales to be hit. "We are keeping a close watch on the situation but, we may see a loss of 50% against projections during the ongoing quarter," he added. While factories remain shut, Sharma said the current inventory is sufficient to cater to demand.

LG is also producing products just enough to cater to the global demand.

According to Haier Appliances India President Eric Braganza, the only hope is lockdowns and curfews are restricted till June but the problem is that by the end of that the season would be over.

Demand revival, economists say, may take longer this year and revenge spending by the urban middle class, which helped the country swifty ride out of the recession last year, may fail to rescue the economy this time around.

NEO BANK

Zeta in billion-dollar club, aided by SoftBank push

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

BENGALURU-based neo banking platform which provides cloud API services to fintech and banking institutions, Zeta, is the latest entrant to the billion dollar startup club of India with a fundraise of $250 million led by Japanese investment giant SoftBank. This is SoftBank's second start-up bet in India for 2021 after leading a $300 million funding round in social commerce platform Meesho earlier this year. Zeta has seen its valuation rise to $1.45 with the latest investment round.

> Banking software is a $300 bn industry. Most banks still employ technology which is older than their customers
>
> Munish Varma, SoftBank Investment Advisers

The firm was valued at $300 million during a Series C funding round in 2019. Zeta's co-founder Bhavin Turakhia said that the company aims to expand its global footprints with the current funds-raise.

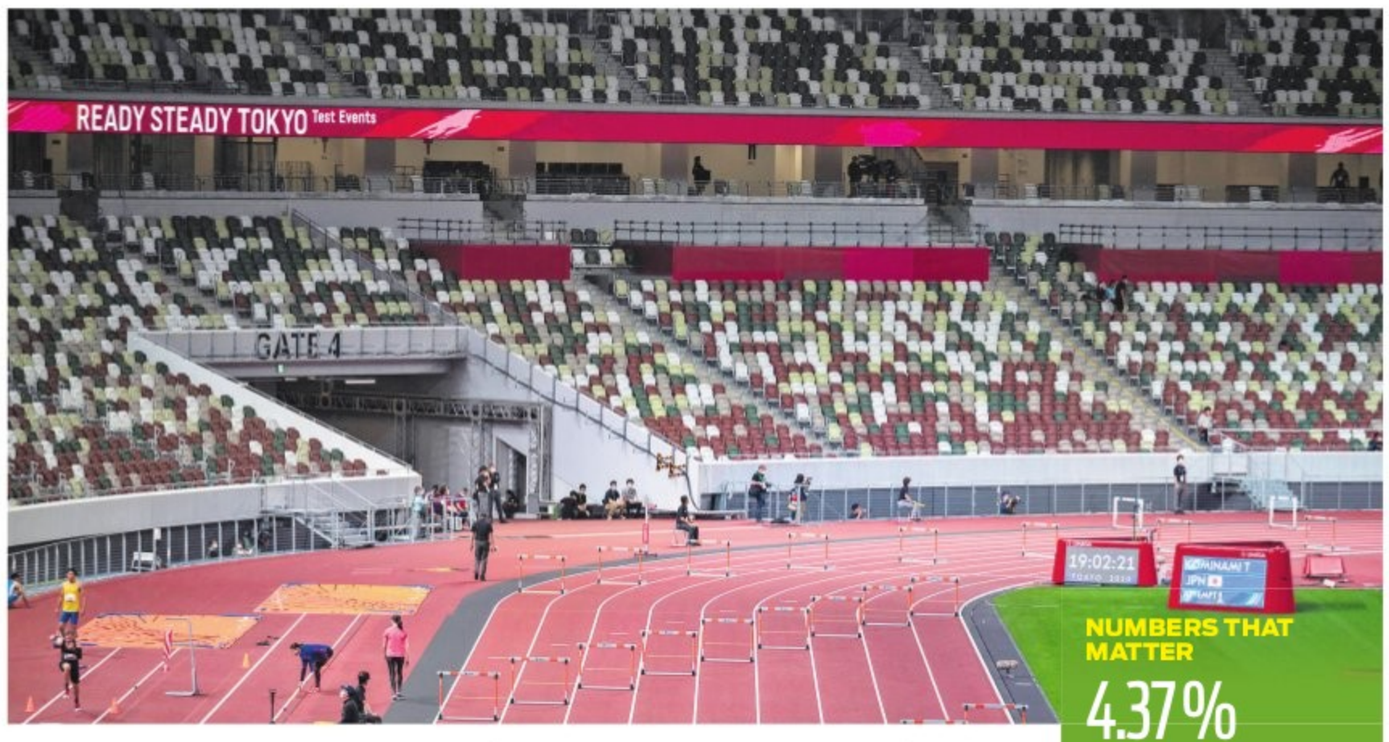
"Most banks are using decades-old software built when Mainframes and Cobol were in vogue. They have been slow to innovate and provide poor user experiences. With Zeta, FIs can leverage a modern, cloud native platform and improve speed to market, cost to income ratio and user experience" Turakhia said.

The firm has tied up with 25 fintech firms and 10 banks, including HDFC Bank, RBL Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Yes Bank.

Year 2021 has so far seen the birth of 14 unicorns as startups leverage the digital acceleration induced by Covid.

Sprint legend Milkha Singh hospitalised, condition stable

Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh, who tested positive for Covid-19 last Wednesday, was on Monday hospitalised, with his son Jeev Milkha Singh saying that the move was a precautionary measure. The 91-year-old Milkha had been in home isolation at his Chandigarh residence. He has now been admitted to Fortis hospital in Mohali.



HOME STRETCH

With less than two months to go for the Tokyo Games, here's the latest briefing on the situation that's coming from the IOC headquarters at Lausanne and from Japan...

What's the IOC's latest verdict?

The Games are most definitely on. The body's VP, John Coates, in fact said the Games would go ahead even if the country, or parts of it, was to be in a state of emergency (as of this moment, various places in the country are under a state of emergency) even during the Games. However, Thomas Bach's comment attracted vitriol. "The athletes definitely can make their Olympic dreams come true. We have to make some sacrifices to make this possible." While it wasn't clear who it was aimed, the guardian's Tokyo correspondent hinted that 'sacrifices' were being asked if the Japanese public. Both of these statements were made over the weekend weekend.

WHAT'S THE GOVERNMENT SAYING?

For starters, they cannot even cancel the Games. That right is exclusively with the IOC. However, local Japanese media are reporting that the government is considering having some spectators in the stands during the Olympics. This is according to a report in Mainichi on Saturday. However, there is growing objection. Latest polls indicate that many do not want the Games to be held. But the IOC and the government have not shown much acknowledgement towards the informal polls.

How's the situation in hospitals?

The fourth wave of the pandemic has not been kind. For example, hospitals in Osaka are overflowing with patients while recent reports indicate that people are dying while waiting to access beds. While the situation isn't as bad in Tokyo, Osaka is a grim reminder of what the virus is capable of doing to even a good healthcare system.

Is there a silver lining? May be

Yes, Japan has a history of vaccine hesitancy. Other factors also meant that the country did not even begin inoculating the elderly till very recently. However, a mass vaccination campaign commenced in the country from Monday onwards. The administration's new aim is to fully vaccinate the country's aged (65 and above) population before the end of July.

What are the athletes saying?

A few are asking for some certainty, with tennis star Roger Federer the most high profile one so far. However, the vast majority of people are training as normal, anticipating that the Games will begin in Tokyo, as slated on July 23. Apart from North Korea, no other country has officially withdrawn.

NUMBERS THAT MATTER

4.37% of Japanese citizens who have received at least one dose of vaccine

10 areas including Tokyo currently under state of emergency

36 million total number of aged (65+) in the country, Japan aims to fully vaccinate this class before end of July

40% Approximate percentage of healthcare workers who are totally vaccinated in Japan

58 days to go for the Olympics

500 No of nurses the IOC want during the Games, this is on top of a request for 200 doctors

The athletes definitely can make their Olympic dreams come true. We have to make some sacrifices to make this possible."

Thomas Bach, during a meeting with FIH on Saturday

OLYMPIC UPDATES

JAPAN UNDER PRESSURE FROM CITIZENS AND DOCTORS

As Japan suffers a fourth wave of Covid-19, domestic opposition to the summer Olympic and Paralympic games is mounting. Two new opinion polls, showing that between 60% and 80% want the Games either cancelled or postponed, have triggered a frenzy of articles all asking the same question: will the Olympics be cancelled? Throughout the spring, there have been rumours that the Olympics would not take place. These have been quashed each time by the IOC and the Japanese government. The latest opinion polls are the clearest sign yet that the public has turned resolutely against the Summer Games.

TOKYO'S SUMO STADIUM USED FOR VACCINATIONS IN COVID FIGHT

Tokyo's sumo stadium was turned into a vaccination centre on Monday with the aim of accelerating an inoculation program that has lagged behind other developed countries. The stadium, which will be used as a boxing venue during Olympics, is located in Sumida Ward where around 25% of residents who are 65 years or older have got vaccinated as of Monday.

DOES PUBLIC OPINION ON OLYMPICS MATTER?

While opinion polls show clear majorities against the Olympics, does public opinion really matter? Japan has an extremely low voter turn-out. Combined with the peculiarities of the electoral system, this means that the LDP does not have to win anything close to a majority of eligible voters in order to retain power. At the last general election, while only 25% percent of eligible voters chose the LDP, this gave them 60% of the seats in Parliament. Simply put, while public opinion matters, it is not decisive. Some opposition leaders have come out against the Games, but overall the opposition is weak and divided.

Boxer Hussamuddin makes perfect start

ANMOL GURUNG @Chennai

MOHAMMAD Hussamuddin (56 kg) gave India a perfect start, beating Makhmud Sabyrkhan of Kazakhstan with a unanimous verdict. The southpaw boxer danced around the ring, evading his opponent at will while also landing some good punches to make a solid start in the opening round. Sensing that he could be behind, his rival Sabyrkhan was more aggressive in the second. He kept coming at Hussamuddin, but the latter continued to maintain smart footwork and sneak in some solid point-fetching punches.

With just the final round to go, Hussamuddin knew he still had work to do as his rival kept up the aggression. It was bound to be a test of will and endurance and Hussamuddin showed his mettle once again to operate smartly and frustrate his rival, who gave it all. In the end, all the judges in the ringside voted in favour of Hussamuddin.

After this gruelling test, Hussamuddin will look to recover quickly as he'll be up against top seed and reigning world champ Mirazizbek Mirzahalilov of Uzbekistan in the quarterfinal on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, all eyes will be on World Championships bronze medallist Simranjit Kaur on the second day of the competition. Simranjit was one of the high-profile boxers who had contracted Covid and had recovered in the nick of time to make it for this competition. The Olympic-bound boxer will face Uzbekistan's Raykhona Kodirova in the women's 60 kg quarterfinal bout. Women's high performance director Raffaele Bergamasco admitted that she is not at the level where she could be in terms of fitness, but nevertheless expects the Punjab boxer to make a mark.

"Simranjit is not in the best of condition but we expect her to do well. She has a massive desire to win and is really an optimistic person in general."

Apart from Simranjit, Sakshi (54 kg), Jasmine (57 kg) will also begin their campaign on Tuesday. Even though she's not part of the Olympics team, this continental event will be an introduction to major boxing for youngster Jasmine. She had recently made a name for herself during the Boxam Tournament in Spain, where she had medalled.

"We are not trying to put undue pressure on her young shoulders. She is ready to give her best," Bergamasco said.

Rowers' Porto trip cancelled

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

Olympic-bound Indian rowers Arvind Singh and Arjun Lal Jat will not travel to Portugal for an exposure trip despite the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) clearing the same last week. A mandatory 14-day quarantine rule in Portugal has resulted in the Rowing Federation of India (RFI) deciding not to send rowers to the country. They instead will train at the Army Rowing Node in Pune till the Tokyo Olympics.

"The trip has been cancelled due to a mandatory 14-day quarantine on arrival in Portugal. It's not practical because practice is crucial every day from now on. Quarantine is not going to help us, it's going to put us back in fact," Rajlaxmi Singh Deo, RFI president, told this daily.

The double sculls' rowers are training in Pune and they are expected to be joined by others next month. "We have given rest to others till June 20. Once they join, they all will also prepare for World Championships scheduled in Shanghai in October this year. Besides, our focus is now on Asian Games next year," signed off Deo.

CSE bearing the brunt of pandemic, but confident of getting back to business

ASHIM SUNAM @Bengaluru

THE Covid-19 situation has hit the sports industry quite badly. With training centres forced to be on and off due to the pandemic amidst the first and second wave, athletes in all disciplines have had to stay indoors for a major part of the last 16-18 months. As a reason, Padukone - Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence (CSE), a multi-sports complex in the city, also faced some setbacks, but remain positive of a better future once the situation improves and restrictions are lifted.

Some well-known academies like Dolphin Aquatics and Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy are also housed in the premises. Ace swimmer Srihari Nataraj and shuttler Lakshya Sen train in the respective facilities as well. Besides, they also have a good athletics track, squash court. They are closed for now.

"Of course, we did get hit last year and the fact is that the facility is just three-and-a-half-years old. So, it is not that we have been in the business for a very long time and it is a matured kind of business. We have also suffered and we had our setbacks as well," said Vivek Kumar, founder and director of CSE, during a Rotary Club of Bangalore virtual meet on Monday.

However, Vivek remains confident that things will get better after having witnessed athletes get back to their academies when the facility opened up after the first wave last year. "In a very quick span of time, academies were able to get back most of their players and students. It was not as bad as we expected when the lockdown first hit us."

"We have some advantages in the Padukone-Dravid CSE as we are a multi-sport facility so people got the confidence looking at some other players playing in our open spaces. Being located slightly in the outskirts of the city is a huge advantage. Some of the leading academies are based at our centre. The combination of all these factors played out and helped us overcome last year. Now we are in a similar situation, with a setback this year. At least, we have the confidence that we played out one year and hopefully, we should be able to see this financial year through as well."

Saurabh and Elavenil shine in Osijek

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

YOUNG guns have punched above their weight in recent years and they are among favourites to make a splash during the upcoming Olympics. Competing in the Minimum Qualification Score (MQS) section -- no finals and medals -- in the ongoing European Shooting Championship in Osijek (Croatia), Saurabh Chaudhary and Elavenil Valarivan finished as toppers in their respective events on Monday.

Saurabh shot an impressive total of 589 in the qualification to finish as No. 1 in the men's 10m air pistol. To put that into context, he had shot 587 in the recent ISSF World Cup in New Delhi, where he had gone on to clinch a silver medal. Abhishek Verma was way behind with a score of 579.

Elavenil, meanwhile, showed why she's so rated highly. The World No. 1 gave a glimpse of what she is capable of, scoring an impressive 630.4 in the women's 10m air rifle.

In the last ISSF World Cup in New Delhi, where she failed to make the final, the qualification stage topper then had shot 629.8. Her senior counterparts Apurvi Chandela and Anjum Moudgil shot 627.8 and 624.7, respectively. "Dusting off from Delhi WC score .. training in Hyderabad with @gagunnarang has been productive with a 630.4 .. in Euro Champs," Elavenil wrote on Twitter after her event.

In the corresponding men's event, Divyansh Singh Panwar was the best performer for India. The World No. 2 shot 628.1, finishing just ahead of teammate Deepak Kumar, who garnered 627.4. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, the third Indian in the fray, shot 625.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

EXPRESS READ

Renedy helps in Covid fight

NEW DELHI: Former India footballer Renedy Singh is working relentlessly to arrange oxygen cylinders in his home state of Manipur to win the battle against Covid. "Our frontline workers have been working tirelessly. It was high time we helped," Renedy was quoted as saying by All India Football Federation.

Kochi IPL players still owed money: Hodge

MELBOURNE: Former Australia batsman Brad Hodge cheekily enquired if BCCI has been able to "locate" the money that the now defunct Kochi Tuskers Kerala owed him for representing them in the 2010 edition of IPL. "Players are still owed 35% of their money earned from ten years ago from the IPL representing Kochi Tuskers," Hodge tweeted.

Spain leave Ramos out of Euro squad

LONDON: Spain coach Luis Enrique left defender Sergio Ramos out of Euro 2020 squad but called up Aymeric Laporte, who recently switched his football nationality. Ramos, the 35-year-old Real Madrid captain struggled with injuries and has played just five times since the start of the year.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No	Material Description	Due date
212213 000912	Procurement of Maize based Native Starch (In Jumbo Bags) for Unit-I	07.06.2021
212213 000913	Procurement of Liquid Chlorine	08.06.2021
212213 000914	Procurement of Sodium Silicate - Alkaline	09.06.2021

Terms & conditions, Specifications. Qty, Tender fee. EMD, etc., are available in tender document at our websites : www.tnpl.com/ www.tenders.tn.gov.in
DIPR/1548/Tender/2021 *TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper*

BANNERGHATTA BIOLOGICAL PARK
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
BANNERGHATTA BIOLOGICAL PARK, BANGALORE
Ph No: 080-29776466, 29776467, E-mail: bannerghattazoo@gmail.com
No. a3/bbp/e-Tender/Feed-Beef/CR-1/2021-22 Date: 21-05-2021
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
The Executive Director, Bannerghatta Biological Park, Bangalore herein after referred as Tender Inviting Authority, has invited short term e-Tender for "Supply of meat of buffalo above the age of thirteen years for the captive wild animals" at Bannerghatta Biological Park for one year from the date of agreement through e-procurement portal htpps://eproc.karnataka.gov.in from the eligible contractor who have got the Trade License Certificate from BBMP and Form-C license under Food Safety & Standard Act, 2006 from BBMP are only eligible to participate in tender.
Tender documents may be downloaded from the Website https:// eproc.karnataka.gov.in. Tenders may be submitted along with EMD and tender fees electronically in e-proc upto 16:00 hrs on or before **11.06.2021.** Tender will be opened on **14.06.2021 at 11:00 hrs**. Other details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.
DIPR/DDU/Shirdi Sai/412/2021-22 Sd/- Executive Director

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
(Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Kerala)
THYCAUD P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695014
Tele:0471-2945646, 2945600 Fax: 2945647
website: www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, e-mail: etenders_ep@kmscl.kerala.gov.in
CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616
No. KMSCL/EP/7278/2021 Dated : 24.05.2021
e-TENDER NOTICE (Running Contract)
Online bids are invited for the supply and installation of the following equipment for various Government healthcare institutions across Kerala

Sl. No	Tender No.	Description	Online Pre-Bid Meeting	Last date of Online submission
1.	T407/2021	Supply and installation of Oxygen Generator System on turnkey basis 500LPM, 1000LPM, 1500LPM, 2000LPM.	N.A.	01.06.2021 03.00 p.m.
2.	T408(R)/ 2021	Air Conditioner various Types, Sample Homogeniser 5L, Insulin Pump with Integrated CGMS, Oxygen Cylinder (B) with Trolley, Ventilator CPAP(Non Invasive), Auscultation Trainer, DIALYSIS CONSUMABLES, ENT and Ophthalmic Examination Head, Reagent Rental Contract Fully Automated Immunohematology Analyser on Reagent Rental Contract_ Model B, Reagent Rental Contract - Fully Automated Immuno Hematology Analyser	N.A.	07.06.2021 05.00 p.m.

State Public Sector undertakings and MSMEs registered in the State or registered outside the state satisfying the policy of Government of India are exempted from remittance of tender document cost and EMD subject to the submission of valid documents, provided all the offered products are manufactured by them. Tender documents and all other information related to tender and bidding process can be downloaded from the website www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.
Sd/- Managing Director (Tender Inviting Authority)

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of India Undertaking)
E-Tender Notice No : CO-M-L206-4-E42550-TN dated 25/05/2021
Konkan Railway Corporation Limited invites open tender electronically through website www.ireps.gov.in for the following works : **General Upkeep, Maintenance, Services including provision of subsidized meals at Ratnagiri Running room on Contract basis for a period of Two years. Estimated Cost:** ₹ 2.14 Crore exclusive of GST. **EMD:** Nil. **Last Date & Time of Submitting Tender in Website :** 17/06/2021 up to 15:00 Hrs. **Date & Time of Opening of Tender :** 15.30 hrs. 17/06/2021. Other details may be viewed on the website **www.ireps.gov.in**

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್, ಬಳ್ಳಾರಿ ಅಕ್ಷರ ದಾಸೋಹ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ
Email:eobelrmms@yahoo.co.in Phone/FaxNo:08392-267667
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಜಿ.ಪಂ.ಬ/ಅ.ದಾ/ಎಫ್.ಸಿ.ಟೆಂಡರ್/ /2021-22 ದಿನಾಂಕ:24.05.2021
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
E-PROCURMENT TENDER FOR TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD GRAINS FROM FCI TO KFCSC GODOWN AND OTHER STORAGE GODOWN ,UNLOADING AND ARRANGING IN STACK FORMATION UNDER ZILLA PANCHAYATH MID DAY MEALS SCHEME
E-PROCURMENT INDENT NUMBER: ZP/MDM/FCI/TENDER/ 2021-2022. **PROCURMENT PARTICULARS:** TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD GRAINS FROM FCI TO KFCSC GODOWN. **LAST DATE:** 08.06.2021. **AMOUNT PUT TO TENDER:** 55.LAKHS. **E-PRO WEBSITE ADDRESS:** http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in
Sd/- Project Director, Zilla Panchayath, Ballari.
DIPR/Ballari/49/MCA/2021-22

Government of Karnataka
Department of Public Instruction
Karnataka School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Council
K.S.E.E.B., 6th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-560 003
Phone: 080-23341615, 23562283, Fax: 080-23347670
e-Mail:ksqaacbangalore@gmail.com
No:K2/O.S.B.S/e-Tender/66/Call-3/2020-21 Date:24.05.2021
e-TENDER NOTIFICATION
The Executive Director, Karnataka School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Council (Reg.), hereby invites e-Tender from eligible bidders for **Providing the Service of manpower such as Driver, Data entry operators and Group 'D' to KSQAAC** as per KTPP Act-1999, only through e-procurement portal. e-Tender documents may be downloaded from **www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in** Commencement date is **24.05.2021** and the last date for submission of tender is **31.05.2021 at 5.00 pm.** Pre bid meeting is on **28.05.2021 at 12.30 pm.** Technical bid will be opened on **03.06.2021 at 12.30 pm.** Financial bid will be opened on **05.06.2021 at 12.30 pm.** The approximate value of the tender is **Rs.17,00,000/-** (Seventeen Lakh only) (per Annum). The Earnest Money Deposit is **Rs.34,000/-** (Thirty four Thousand only) for more details contact KSQAAC during office hours.
Sd/- Executive Director, K.S.Q.A.A.C.

New gene therapy partially restores blind man's sight

Light-catching proteins added to retina help patient gain some vision in major study that backs theory that optogenetics can work

A volunteer wearing a electroencephalogram cap is asked to say whether the cup was on the white table or not in this experimental set-up | INSTITUT DE LA VISION

OPHTHALMOLOGY

PARIS: Scientists have for the first time managed to partially restore the sight of a blind patient by altering his cells, according to the results of a groundbreaking study published on Monday.

The technique known as optogenetics, which has been developed in the field of neuroscience over the last 20 years, involves genetically altering cells so they produce more light-sensitive proteins.

In some cases of blindness, known as inherited photoreceptor diseases, light-sensing cells in the retina that use proteins to deliver visual information to the brain via the optic nerve progressively degenerate.

Scientists in Europe and the US recruited a man who had lost his sight due to an inherited photoreceptor disease 40 years ago and began treating him with optogenetic techniques.

This involved injections in his eye and several months of stimulation with light emitting goggles, which transformed images of the visual world into light pulses projected into the retina in real time.

In a clinical first, they were able to restore partial sight for the 58-year old patient, leaving him able to recognise, count, locate and touch different objects laid out on a table in front of him.

Jose-Alain Sahel, lead study author from France's Sorbonne University and National Centre for Scientific Research, said the trial provided proof-of-concept confirmation that it was possible to use optogenetics to restore sight in humans.

"Importantly, blind patients with different kinds of neurodegenerative photoreceptor disease and a functional optic nerve will potentially be eligible for the treatment," he said.

"However, it will take time until this therapy can be offered to patients," added Sahel, who is also a professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine's Department of Ophthalmology.

During the tests, the patient was able to locate and touch a notebook on a table in front of him 92 percent of the time while wearing the goggles. Without them, he was unable to perform any visual task.

Botond Roska, from the Institute of Molecular and Clinical Ophthalmology Basel, said that the patient was initially frustrated as he could not perceive objects even after months of training with the goggles.

"And then spontaneously, he started to get very excited, reporting that he was able to see and getting very excited about this achievement," said Roska, who co-authored the study published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"It's exciting. It's really good to see it working and getting some definite responses from patients," David Birch, a retinal degeneration expert, told *Science News*. Birch was not involved in this study, which is the result of 13 years of work.

Sahel told *The New York Times* that the result is "obviously not the end of the road, but it's a major milestone".

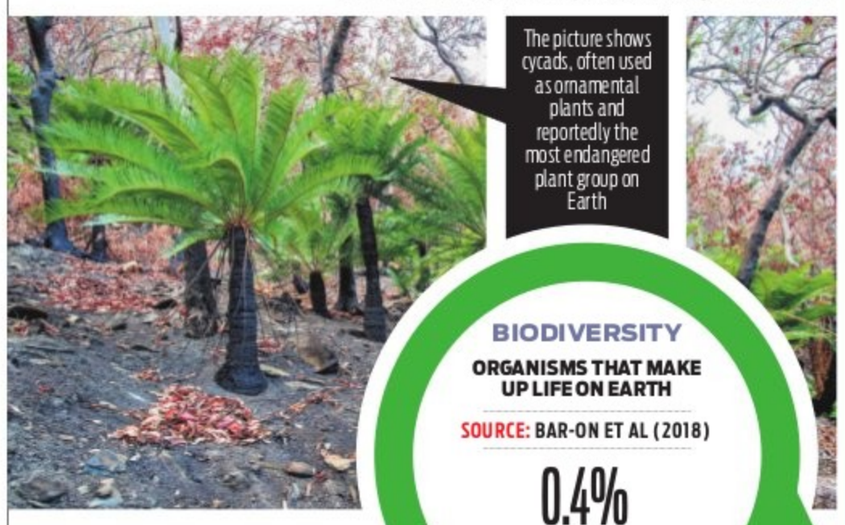
Scientists such as Sahel have tried unsuccessfully for decades to find a cure for inherited blindness, thought there has been some success with a genetic form of blindness called Leber congenital amaurosis.

Sahel and his colleagues have formed a company called GenSight to get their medical treatment approved by regulators through clinical trials.

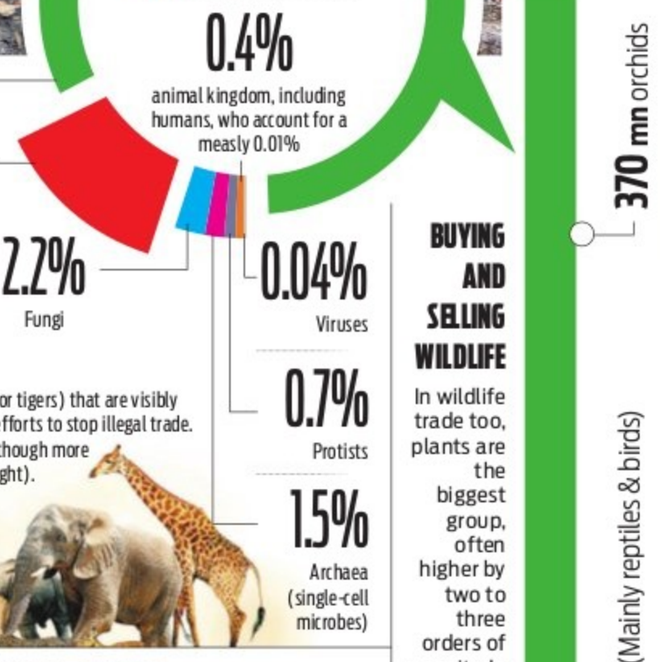
EXFILE • NATURE

ROOTS OF OUR PLANT BLINDNESS

Governments, scientists and media pay a lot of attention to threats to the animal kingdom, so much so that plants have become a sort of inferior, background species in wildlife conservation efforts, though they make up most of Earth's biomass (see chart below). The neglect was noticed as far back as 1999, when two researchers coined the phrase "plant blindness" to highlight the alarming disparity. Such a blindspot in science and public policy means that the world also lacks salient data on many plant species that are at critical risk of extinction, particularly due to the illegal wildlife trade



The picture shows cycads, often used as ornamental plants and reportedly the most endangered plant group on Earth



NOT CUTE ENOUGH

Endangered animals (such as elephants or tigers) that are visibly appealing to the public are the focus of efforts to stop illegal trade. Whereas plants receive scant attention, though more of them are being traded (see chart on right). Plants are used to make essential oils, medicines, personal care products and ornamental items. Some also become prized objects for private collectors

WHO REGULATES WILDLIFE TRADE?

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the primary governing body. CITES lays rules for only around 36,000 protected species, with millions not listed

WHEN LAW IS BOTH BOON & BANE

Plants grown and sold by local communities can help in their sustainable management, but many countries prohibit this though legislation. This has the unintended effect of worsening illegal international trade of species such as cacti. Local communities have also been exploited by organised criminal groups in the extraction of these valuable plants

COMPILED BY: ARAVINDAKSHAN S. DESIGN: ANSHUL SHRIVASTAVA

BUYING AND SELLING WILDLIFE

In wildlife trade too, plants are the biggest group, often higher by two to three orders of magnitude than animals. The chart lists the number of specimens traded

These are global trade numbers for 2000-2005 in CITES-listed plant & animal species (Animal figures are for live organisms)

SOURCE: ROE (2008)

31%

of some 1,478 cacti species (a global majority) are threatened with extinction

SOURCE: GOETTSCH ET AL (2015)

OPERATION ATACAMA

A highly detailed case study of a crackdown on the trafficking of a rare and endangered cactus brings to the fore the issues surrounding the illegal wildlife trade

1,035 CACTI

from the genera *Copiapoa* and *Eriosyce*, originating from Chile, were confiscated in Italy in 2020. The seizure resulted from an extraordinary collaboration between researchers and authories to intercept illegal plant shipments, *The New York Times* reported recently

100 YEARS OLD

Some of the plants were over a century old and very valuable

₹30,000 - ₹1,00,000

an individual cacti of this species could be worth, as per the IUCN, which said many of the plants were shipped to Asian countries

THE RAIDS

[Illegal cactus trade] was a much smaller issue 20 years ago, but now, it is major. Entire populations are being stripped

Jeff Pavlat, president of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, told *The Times*

Italian police discovered the Chilean cacti in the home of a well-known cactus collector. Andrea Cattabriga, president of the Association for Biodiversity and Conservation, arranged for temporary care in Milan for the cacti, many of which were ailing

HARDY PLANTS

Though the cacti can survive long journeys without needing soil, water or light, replanting them in Italy would have likely killed them as they are found only in certain areas of Chile, *The Times* reported

1,15,000 medics died from Covid-19: WHO

DATA

GENEVA: At least 1,15,000 health and care workers have died from Covid-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, the WHO chief said Monday, calling for a dramatic scale-up of vaccination in all countries.

At the opening of the World Health Organization's main annual assembly, Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus hailed the sacrifices made by health workers around the world to battle the pandemic.

"For almost 18 months, health and care workers all over the world have stood in the breach between life and death," he said. "They have saved countless lives and fought for others who, despite their best efforts, slipped away.

"Many have themselves become infected, and while reporting is scant, we estimate that at least 1,15,000 health and care workers have paid the ultimate price in the service of others."

He said many health workers have since the start of the crisis felt "frustrated, helpless and unprotected, with a lack of access to personal protective equipment and vaccines."

And they are not alone. He described the overall inequity in access to vaccines as "scandalous", warning it was "perpetuating the pandemic."

More than 75 percent of all Covid-19 vaccines have gone to just 10 countries.

"The number of doses administered globally so far would have been enough to cover all health workers and older people if they had been distributed equitably," he said.

"There is no diplomatic way to say it: that small group of countries that make and buy the majority of the world's vaccines control the fate of the rest of the world." He urged those countries that have large stocks of vaccines to share them, and greater cooperation to scale up production and distribution of the jabs.

The WHO and others have created Covax, a global vaccine-sharing programme, but it remains severely underfunded and has faced significant supply shortages, delaying efforts to roll out jabs in poorer countries. "We have shipped every single one of the 72 million doses we have been able to get our hands on so far to 125 countries and economies," Tedros said.

New virus repository in Switzerland

SCIENCE

SWITZERLAND signed a deal with the World Health Organization on Monday to host a global repository for viruses with pandemic potential to bolster international defences against emerging threats.

The BioHub laboratory will store and analyse pathogens from across the globe and enhance the rapid sharing of information between labs around the world.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it would be a "reliable, safe, and transparent mechanism for member states to voluntarily share pathogens and clinical samples".

The memorandum of understanding was signed at the WHO's headquarters in Geneva.

The facility will be hosted at the Swiss defence ministry's biological safety laboratories in the lakeside town of Spiez.

Currently, most pathogen data sharing is done between individual countries in an ad hoc way, which can be slow and leave some states out of the loop.

CEREMONIAL WEAPON

An auction house employee holds a massive Indian processional headsman's sword from the 19th century, beside body armour at the Bonhams' Antique Arms and Armour sale in London. The sword is estimated to fetch between ₹4 lakh - ₹5.1 lakh | AP

FACT OF THE MATTER

China's hold on solar market

ENVIRONMENT

The world's growing shift to solar power is colliding with complaints that the industry depends on Chinese raw materials that might be produced by forced labour. A big hurdle is polysilicon, used to make photovoltaic cells for solar panels. The global industry gets 45% of its supply from Xinjiang, the northwestern region where the ruling Communist Party is accused of mass incarceration of minorities and other abuses. Other parts of China supply 35%. Only 20% comes from U.S. and other producers. The biggest manufacturers all use raw materials from Xinjiang, as per a recent report from Sheffield Hallam University researchers.

New Covid breath test

HEALTH

Singapore authorities on Monday provisionally approved a breath test developed by three graduates of the National University of Singapore (NUS) and a India-born professor that can detect Covid-19 within a minute. Developed by Breathonix, a spin-off company of NUS, the BreFence Go COVID-19 test is the first breath analysis system to secure such authorisation in Singapore. Breathonix is now working with the health ministry to run a deployment trial of their technology at one of the land checkpoints where incoming travellers will undergo screening with the breath test system.

QUICK RESULTS

New study adds to evidence that sniffer dogs could remove need for travel quarantine

RESEARCH

DOGS can be trained to detect more than 90 percent of Covid-19 infections even when patients are asymptomatic, according to research published Monday, which authors hope could help replace the need to quarantine new arrivals.

Using their remarkable sense of smell -- which can pick up the equivalent of half a teaspoon of sugar in an olympic-sized swimming pool -- dogs have already shown that they can sniff out maladies such as cancer, malaria and epilepsy.

Several previous studies have shown proof-of-concept that dogs can detect SARS-CoV-2.

Researchers from the London School of Tropical Medicine wanted to see if dogs could detect a distinctive odour given off from chemical compounds associated with someone who is Covid positive but doesn't show symptoms.

They gathered samples of clothing and face masks from people who had tested positive for mild or symptomatic SARS-CoV-2.

Samples of the socks of 200 Covid-19 cases were collected and arranged in lab tests for six dogs that had been trained to indicate either a presence or absence of the chemical compound.

The dogs needed to be trained not to identify "false positives" in a bid to hack their reward system and obtain treats even if there were no Covid-19 samples in a given test.

"This means that the dog fully understands and gets a reward for a correct negative as well as a correct positive," said Claire Guest, from the school's Faculty of Infectious and Tropical Diseases.

Overall, the dogs were successfully able to identify between 94 and 82 percent of SARS-CoV-2 samples.

A file image of sniffer dogs, K'ssi and Miina, playing with their trainer Susanna Paavilainen at the Helsinki airport in Vantaa, Finland | AP

The researchers then modelled how effectively these success rates, combined with traditional PCR tests, could help detect mild or asymptomatic Covid-19 cases.

They found that using dogs to screen arrivals at terminuses such as airports could detect 91 percent of cases, resulting in a 2.24 times lower rate of transmission than with PCR tests alone.

Authors of the research, which has yet to be peer-reviewed, said they hoped it could eventually replace the need for travellers to quarantine -- which necessarily disrupts every arrival even though the vast majority are not Covid positive. "The key thing is that dogs are significantly quicker than other tests," said co-author James Logan. "What we're suggesting is that dogs would give the first initial screening, and then those (arrivals) that were indicated as positive would then receive a complimentary PCR test."

The team said that out of a plane full of arrivals -- around 300 people -- less than one percent were statistically likely to be carrying SARS-CoV-2.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS City

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25.05.2021
TUESDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Movie release

Star Wars, an epic space-opera media franchise created by George Lucas, began on this day with the release of *Episode IV - A New Hope in 1977*

THE PLOT

Luke Skywalker joins forces with a Jedi Knight, a cocky pilot, a Wookiee and two droids to save the galaxy from the Empire's world-destroying battle station, while also attempting to rescue Princess Leia from the mysterious Darth Vader

AWARDS

Star Wars won six competitive Oscars as well as a Special Achievement Award that was presented to Ben Burtt for the creation of the robot and alien voices in the film

WHEN FRIENDS GET TOGETHER

Lucas was so sure this movie would flop that instead of attending the premiere, he went on vacation to Hawaii with Steven Spielberg, where they came up with the idea for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

Divya Suresh on her lip-lock scene in Rowdy Baby

PG 4

STARTUP WATCH

BACKSTORY

MedPiper Technologies is a Bengaluru-based healthcare startup established in April 2020 by Nitthin Chandran Nair and Pranay Suyash. The startup is building a 'practitioner data stack' for healthcare practitioners globally. It aims to provide visibility and transparency among verified medical practitioners to deliver innovative solutions to the healthcare industry.

FINANCE FUNDA

Till date the startup has raised around Rs 87 crore. This includes seed raise and grants from YCombinator, MSA Capital, and NSRCEL. They have also received angel investments from American and Japanese firms.

USP

According to the founders, the startup verifies and connects doctors and other healthcare professionals with hospitals and healthcare organisations/ tele-medicine platforms for duty vacancies and clinical assignments. This ensures there is real-time engagement with patients which develops transparency in healthcare organisations.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The startup targets certified medical practitioners globally and any healthcare ecosystem partner that requires access and engagement to real-time practitioners. Currently, over 65,000 doctors engage on a monthly basis via the startup, thus serving over 4,000 clinics and health centres.

Pranay Suyash (left) & Nitthin Chandran Nair

A still from the show

Quirky like Phoebe, smart like Rachel or comfy like Monica... Dress up as your favourite character for the much-awaited *Friends* reunion

STYLE IT LIKE A SITCOM

SIMRAN AHUJA

NO one told us life would be this way – where we would be working from home as a pandemic rages on. But despite the circumstances, fans of the hit sitcom *Friends* have something to look forward to: More than a decade after the 10-season series came to an end, its six popular characters - Rachel, Ross, Phoebe, Joey, Monica and Chandler - are getting together for a special reunion episode, set to air on May 27.

With the episode just around the corner, city fashionistas tell you how you can channel your inner Monica, Rachel or Phoebe with things you already own.

Monica's style is confident and androgynous, with a hint of femininity. This '90s-inspired Monica Geller look of a cropped top and wide leg pants is on point in 2021 too

Madhurima Bhattacharjee

Look courtesy: Madhurima Bhattacharjee, founder and creative director at Madhurima Bhattacharjee

THE MONICA GELLER LOOK

Pair a black crop top with a pair of grey (or any dark colour) cotton cropped pants

Add a straw bag and wedges for a summer look

Keep the makeup clean with just a dark brown eyeliner and a peachy pink semi-matte lipstick. Hair can be kept natural and air dried

THE RACHEL GREEN LOOK

Pair a white top or t-shirt with a black pair of hot pants/ skirt/skort

Wear black heels or ankle-length boots

Straighten your hair.

Wear a pair of studs and a sleek watch or bracelet. Carry a baguette bag.

Keep the makeup neutral - as Rachel always did - with a nude or brown matte lipstick. Finish with a subtle winged liner or leave the outer corners of your eyes a little smoky.

Look courtesy: Deena Pinto, stylist and lifestyle influencer **(@SkinnyGirlDiariez on Instagram)**

I owe Rachel Green a lot as an idol and my fashion guru in the 90s. My sense of style has evolved around dressing up in a feminine, casual manner, while exuding an oomph factor. This look in particular is a classic and easy to recreate, making it perfect for a movie night or brunch (whenever it is safe to do so)

- Deena Pinto

THE PHOEBE BUFFAY LOOK

Wear a baggy sweater/ untucked button-down shirt.

Pair this with a long maxi skirt, preferably in a floral or geometric print. Feel free to play with the hems.

Wear boots (calf or ankle-length). You can also wear clogs, which her character is famous for sporting.

Try one or more long necklaces, or layered short necklaces or a choker. Optional add ons: Dangler earrings, stacked rings, wristwatch.

Pick any characteristic Phoebe hairstyle - long wavy locks let free, half pulled up, or double braids.

Phoebe's outfits seem very spur-of-the-moment but there is genius behind the way she combines her prints, fabrics, garment proportions and accessories

Aparna Balasubramanian

Look courtesy: Aparna Balasubramanian, founder, The Fine Finds (@thefinefinds on Instagram)

Bengaluru City Police has upped their game, and are using TV show characters to get people to follow Covid-19 protocol

Not just for laughs

We're proud of every Bengalurean
doing their bit to overcome this.
WE'RE MORE PROUD OF BENGALURU
than Captain Holt is of nine-nine.
The fact that you're not
willing to give up in the face
of adversity is inspiring.

David knows COVID-19 sucks.
David puts his phone away and stays in.
DAVID IS SMART. BE LIKE DAVID.
I'm trying very hard
not to connect with
people right now!

SANATH PRASAD

ALTHOUGH the #ArrestCorona campaign was launched a year ago to educate people about safety protocol, Bengaluru City Police (BCP) has now tapped into sitcoms and TV shows to remind pandemic-weary people that it's not over yet. And so, through the month of May, the BCP's Instagram, Twitter and Facebook have been filled with characters such as Mr Bean, some from *Friends, Brooklyn Nine-Nine* and *Schitt's Creek*, to create awareness.

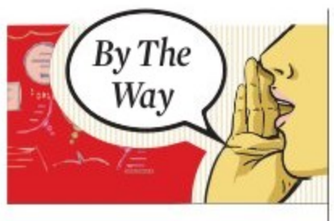
For example, to reinforce the messaging on physical distancing, they've used Mr Bean with one leg high up in the air – a feat that would make any gymnast proud – indicating that you must maintain distance from other people.

To ensure everyone stays at home during the lockdown – imposed on May 10 and in force until June 7 – the team has deployed David Rose, a character from the English sitcom Schitt's Creek. Drawing on the character's fear of germs, the poster shows him reluctant to venture out and putting off his plans for sometime.

Isha Pant, DCP Command Centre Bengaluru, and social media head for BCP, says, "Including comics does not mean trivialising things. We are trying to catch people's attention. Generally, people tend to ignore messages through other mediums but humour actually catches people's attention. The response to these international fictional characters has been good as Bengaluru has a global citizenry and they are more tuned to international characters."

The messaging is not just about reminding people to follow safety measures. The police also have a big thank you for the residents, for keeping the faith even in times of adversity. For this, they used Captain Holt, a strict officer from *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, to tell Bengalureans that their perseverance is appreciated.

On whether such messaging would have the intended effect on people, a cop associated with the campaign says the theme was decided after much thought and research. "As per our audience analytics, many in the city do watch these sitcoms. Besides, as part of the #ArrestCorona campaign, we have also featured many city-based celebrities from sports and film sectors to spread word on Covid appropriate-behaviour," he says.



Smile please

Shubra Aiyappa has been spreading some much-needed dose of positivity and motivation on Instagram. Her last two posts show the actor smiling and checking in on fans and followers. In one post she asked everyone to share the little things making them happy, and in another, she wrote, "Bugs bunny checking in on you all".

Oxygen On Wheels

For the past month, Yatish Babu and four of his friends have been busy supplying oxygen to Covid patients in Bengaluru round-the-clock

Yatish Babu

HELPING HAND

Last year, during the lockdown, Babu had travelled over 10,000km on a two-wheeler with his friend to supply medicines to people in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and also within Karnataka. "My team and I have managed to help not just people diagnosed with Covid, but also people suffering from cancer, heart ailments, and those needing dialysis," Babu says.

SANATH PRASAD

IT'S been over a month since Yatish Babu last went home. He's been working with his friends to supply oxygen cylinders to Covid patients all over the city.

Early in April, at the insistence of his loved ones, he procured two cylinders. But soon, it was evident that the virus was making it difficult for people to breathe and oxygen supplies were stretched. By the last week of April, he and his friends began to procure cylinders and supply them to patients at their homes free of charge. Each day for the past month, he has received 8-10 requests a day, and has supplied cylinders to 250 people.

"We managed to procure 18-20 cylinders from industries and friends with different storage capacity. Some can store 10 litres, 47 litres, and seven litres. We give the cylinders to patients and take it back when they get better, refill it and give it to others," says the 47-year-old. He got some cylinders from friends in Mysuru and some from Peenya Industrial Gases Pvt Limited.

Babu, who works as a private consultant, and his friends Vijay S, Praveen Gowda, Krishna Sagar, and Basavaraju have been living in a hotel for the past month or so as to avoid putting their families at risk. "I have not been able to talk to them these days. I have dedicated myself to working on the ground," says Babu.

Babu says he has spent around ₹5-6 lakh to fund oxygen supplies. He has signed up with crowdsourcing platform Milaap, but his account is yet to be activated. "For now I am managing with my own money. I have also taken a loan from a bank," says Babu.

IMPROV STORYTELLING

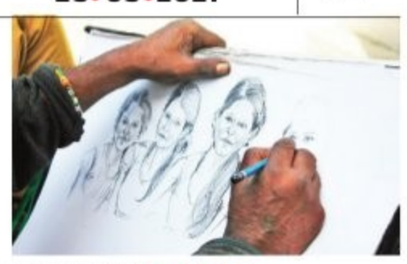
Enjoy online improv storytelling sessions every Wednesday. The event is hosted by Kaivalya Plays which focuses on giving a platform to artistes and other individuals to present stories, characters and scenes spontaneously. **Details:** insider.in

DIGITAL CIRCUS SHOW

Rambo circus is organising 'Life is a Circus', its first-ever digitally-produced show in multiple locations. The event aims to induce laughter, entertainment and much more with artistes performing from their homes. **When:** May 28 onwards **Details:** bookmyshow.com

CLASSICAL EVENT

Watch Bharathantyam dancer Suma Anurag perform to the tunes of devotional music. Ganapatri stuti, raaga naata, adithala, thillana, ashtapadi, annamacharya kriti are some of the tracks she will be performing. **When:** May 29 **Tickets:** bookmyshow.com



SKETCHING CLASSES

Here's a chance to sign up for pencil sketching classes dedicated to adults. The classes include concepts such as learning and fine-tuning the basics of drawing, pencil shading, creating highlights, textures, depth and 3D effects. **When:** May 29 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

ENJOY A COMEDY SHOW, THE EXPERT, FEATURING COMIC ARTISTE SORABH PANT AS HE TALKS ABOUT POLITICS, SPORTS AND MORE **TICKETS:** BOOKMYSHOW.COM

Musical Tribute

Bengaluru Classical Arts Circle is paying a musical tribute to renowned classical music organiser late D Pranesh Babu. The online event will feature artistes like Pt. Muddu Mohan, Pt. Iman Das and Radhika Venkatramana who will be performing Hindustani and Carnatic jugalbandi and more. **When:** May 29 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

Triathlon Sessions

Triathlon coaching team - Life of Tri is conducting a month-long virtual sports session for athletes. The sessions will focus on cycling and indoor fitness routines followed by interactive sessions with experts from various fields like swimming, running, cycling, nutrition and more. **When:** Ongoing **Details:** Life of Triathletes website

Virtual Gig

Enjoy a virtual musical concert featuring playback singer Usha Uthup. The event will feature a special list of songs curated based on 'The Original Take on Nightclub Era'. Also get a chance to visit the virtual backstage and interact with artistes. **Details:** insider.com

Skilling Up

Enlighted Sapiens, a social enterprise is conducting a virtual interactive session on how to discover the inner-self, dominant intuitive style and staying connected. It also focuses on training the participants in enhanced decision making process **When:** May 30 **Details:** insider.in

Theatre Workshop

Acting coach Dimple Kalshan is organising online theatre games for teen and pre-teens. The workshop aims to train participants in team-work, team-building, leadership, creative skills and much more. **When:** May 27, **Details:** bookmyshow.com

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

BUTTER, ALMOND, HONEY CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- **Unsalted butter:** 180 g, chilled, chopped, **Eggs:** 5, **Caster sugar:** 1/3 cup
- **Honey:** 1/2 cup + 60 g for drizzle, **Vanilla extract:** 2 tsp
- **Powdered almond:** 2.5 cups, **Plain flour:** 2/3 cup, **Baking powder:** 2/3 tsp
- **Almonds:** 100 g, chopped, icing sugar, to serve; zest of 2 limes, juice of 1

METHOD

- Preheat oven to 160°C. Grease a cake pan and line with parchment paper. Heat butter in a saucepan over medium-high heat until brown. Cool to room temperature.
- Whisk eggs, sugar, vanilla and half the honey until pale and doubled in volume. Fold in powdered almond, flour, baking powder, lime zest and juice and a pinch of salt.
- Stir in 2/3 of burnt butter and fold to combine. Pour into pan.
- Combine chopped almonds, remaining butter, honey and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Scatter over batter. Bake for 40-45 minutes.
- Drizzle extra honey and cool. Serve at room temperature.

— Sharanya Vadepalli, Hyderabad

FIT BIT

PUNGU KUKKUTASANA

(WOUNDED ROOSTER POSE)

In Sanskrit, 'pungu' means wounded, 'Kukkuta' means rooster, and 'asana' means pose. It is an advanced arm-balancing posture with a twist. The Drishti (gaze) in this asana should be toward the nose. Some also use the Sanskrit names Parsva Kukkutasana (side rooster) and Parivritta Kukkutasana (twisted rooster) to describe this pose, but the leg position may vary slightly. It reduces stress and anxiety, quiets the ego. Traditionally, it is said to activate the Manipura (solar plexus) chakra, which is associated with self-confidence, self-motivation and transforming power.

STEPS

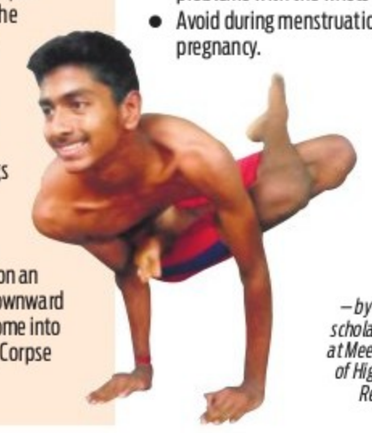
- Start in Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward Dog Poe).
- Jump into a headstand on an inhale.
- You can fold your legs into lotus.
- Lower and swing to the right with an exhale so that the left thigh is on the outside of the upper right arm.
- Lift up and balance on an inhale.
- Take five breaths. Make sure that your Drishti (gaze) is toward the nose.
- Inhale as you place the head to the floor and re-enter the headstand (staying in lotus).
- Exhale as the lotus swings to the left. Inhale head up to balance on the second side.
- To exit, inhale, back up to headstand and keep legs straight.
- Exhale down into chaturanga on an and on to Downward Dog. Then come into Shavasana (Corpse Pose).

BENEFITS

- Helps strengthen the arms, wrists and core.
- Helps create flexibility in the knees, hips, and if the pose is not completely accessible, in the heart.
- Cures dyspepsia and diseases of the stomach like gulma (chronic gastritis), and reduces splenic and liver-enlargement by increasing the intra-abdominal pressure.
- The lungs and whole abdominal viscera are toned and stimulated by the increase of intra-abdominal pressure.
- Also helps the sluggishness of liver or hepatic torpidity disappear.
- Tones the bowels, removes constipation.

LIMITATIONS

- Should not be performed after any abdominal surgery.
- If you have high blood pressure or glaucoma, avoid practising this.
- It should not be practiced, if you have problems with the wrists or elbows.
- Avoid during menstruation and pregnancy.



— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

SOUND BOARD

DARKNESS RADIO

Dave and Tim take listeners on an entertaining journey into all aspects of the supernatural, from ghosts and aliens, to monsters, mysteries, myths and legends with guest experts, experiencers and eye witnesses.
- On Apple Podcasts

THE WILD WITH CHRIS MORGAN

Taking listeners across the Pacific Northwest and around the world, host Chris Morgan explores wildlife and the complex web of ecosystems they inhabit. He also tells the stories of people working in and protecting the wild around us.
- On Stitcher

NATURE PODCAST

The Nature Podcast brings you the best stories from the world of science each week. We cover everything from astronomy to zoology, highlighting the most exciting research from each issue of Nature journal.
- On Apple Podcast

VAYADI

Vayadi is a podcast from Chennai Art Theatre. It features a range of lesser-known and spoken about topics; along with radio plays, artist profiles, technical know-how in theatre and much more.
- On Spotify

THE PERSONAL FINANCE PODCAST

Andrew Giancola from Dollar After Dollar reveals all of his personal finance, money, investing, business strategies, income sources, stock, and real estate investing tips so that you can build more wealth than you ever thought possible.
- On Spotify

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

RX SOORI

A young gangster becomes infamous for his criminal activities in Andhra Pradesh. But things change when he falls in love with his childhood friend.
- Cast: Duniya Vijay, Ravi Shankar, Adi Lokesh

MALLA

Shiva, a florist's son, grows up to become a gangster. After his father is murdered, he sets out to take revenge against the culprits.
- Cast: V Ravichandran, Priyanka Upendra, Umashree

KEMPEGOWDA

Kempe Gowda, an honest police officer and a people's man, takes on a gangster, Armugam. However, the mafia leader has close connections with the bureaucrats, which keeps him safe against the law.
- Cast: Kichcha Sudeep, Ravishankar, Ragini Dwivedi

ANTARAVIRALLI

Sanjay and Nitya fall in love with each other despite facing opposition from their peers. They soon become intimate and Nitya gets pregnant, which causes problems in their lives.
- Cast: Prakhyuth Paramesh, Achyuth Kumar, Chikkanna

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 WHAT IS DEPRESSION BY HELEN M FARRELL

Depression is the leading cause of disability in the world; in the United States, close to ten percent of adults struggle with the disease. But because it's a mental illness, it can be a lot harder to understand. Helen M Farrell examines the symptoms and treatments of depression, and gives some tips for how you might help a friend who is suffering.

2 THE WORLD'S OLDEST LIVING THINGS BY RACHEL SUSSMAN

Rachel Sussman shows photographs of the world's oldest continuously living organisms — from a 2,000-year-old brain coral off Tobago's coast to an underground forest in South Africa that has lived since before the dawn of agriculture.

3 THE BRAIN-CHANGING BENEFITS OF EXERCISE BY WENDY SUZUKI

What's the most transformative thing that you can do for your brain today? Exercise! says neuroscientist Wendy Suzuki. Get inspired to go to the gym as Suzuki discusses the science of how working out boosts your mood and memory — and protects your brain against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's.

4 HOW TO DECONSTRUCT RACISM, ONE HEADLINE AT A TIME BY BARATUNDE THURSTON

Baratunde Thurston explores the phenomenon of white Americans calling the police on black Americans who have committed the "crimes". In this talk, he reveals the power of language to change stories of trauma into stories of healing — while challenging us all to level up.

5 WHY YOU SHOULD GET PAID FOR YOUR DATA BY JENNIFER ZHU SCOTT

In this eye-opening talk, entrepreneur and technologist Jennifer Zhu Scott makes the case for private data ownership — which would empower you to donate, destroy or sell your data as you see fit — and shows how this growing movement could put power (and cash) back into the hands of people.

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

ARISHADVARGA (Kannada)

An aspiring actor doubling as an amateur gigolo gets caught up in a sticky situation after accepting a surprise gift from an anonymous client. Cast: Sumyuktha Hornad, Anju Alva Naik
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

INSPECTOR VIKRAM (Kannada)

Vikram, a police officer, strives hard to solve every case that comes his way. However, things take a turn when he encounters a criminal mastermind who runs an illegal drug operation.
Cast: Prajwal Devaraj, Bhavana
- Watch on Sunnxt

HERO (Kannada)

A barber stumbles upon his ex-lover in the home of a notoriously bloodthirsty gang leader. Misadventures ensue when he tries to help her escape with the gangster's men in hot pursuit. Cast: Rishab Shetty, Pramod Shetty
- Watch on: Zee 5

KAPPELA (Malayalam)

A young woman falls in love with a man after dialling his number by mistake. However, when she visits his city to meet him, a stranger named Roy enters her life.

Cast: Anna Ben Nayarambalam, Roshan Mathew, Tanvi Ram, Sreenath Bhasi
- Watch on: Netflix

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

CINEMA BANDI (Telugu)

A struggling rickshaw driver's life takes a rollicking turn when he comes across an expensive camera and decides to make a film with his fellow villagers.

Cast: Trishara, Pujari Ram Charan, Uma YG, Davani
- Watch on: Netflix

SARDAR KA GRANDSON (Hindi)

A devoted grandson embarks on a complicated and comic journey to fulfill his ailing grandmother's last wish.

Cast: Arun Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh, Neena Gupta, John Abraham
- Watch on: Netflix

MELLE (Malayalam)

After a tragic experience, a young woman journeys to her father's homeland and falls in love with a kind-hearted doctor.

Cast: Amit Chakkalackal, Thanuja Karthik, Joju George, P Balachandran
- Watch on: Netflix

FOREIGN

THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW (English)

Agoraphobic Dr Anna Fox witnesses something she shouldn't while keeping tabs on the Russell family, the seemingly picture perfect clan that lives across the way.

Cast: Amy Adams, Julianne Moore, Gary Oldman, Wyatt Russell
- Watch on: Netflix

FAUDA (Israeli, series)

After retiring from the Israel Defense Force, Doron is working on a vineyard. Upon learning that an enemy who Doron thought his unit had killed is still alive, Doron rejoins the IDF team.

Cast: Lior Raz, Rona-Lee Shimon, Laetitia Eido, Itzik Cohen
- Watch on: Netflix

THE INTERPRETER (English)

A United Nations interpreter's life is turned upside down and she is targeted by killers, when she overhears a plot to assassinate an African head of state.

Cast: Nicole Kidman, Sean Penn, Catherine Keener, Jesper Christensen
- Watch on: Netflix

LITTLE (English)

Jordan Sanders, a successful businesswoman who treats her employees poorly, wakes up one morning to discover that she has been transformed into her 13-year-old self, who was constantly bullied.

Cast: Marsai Martin, Regina Hall, Issa Rae, Justin Hartley
- Watch on: Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION

Prime Video: ₹ 129 per month
Disney+Hotstar: ₹ 399 per year
Netflix: ₹ 199 per month

Passageways to the past

OPEN SPACE
Tina Shashikanth
Chief Sub Editor
ruchita@newindianexpress.com

Years ago, while cleaning out a dingy attic at my maternal home just before it was overhauled, I found a wooden trunk with my mother's journals in it. It contained letters, photographs along with some sketches and paintings. She was delighted. Of these, I found to my interest a series of letters by a friend from London who wrote about the importance of maintaining an elaborate journal. "It may seem impassionate, even boring at times but you will come to realise its importance in later years," he stressed. My mother had newspaper cuttings, a beautiful collection of pressed leaves, matchboxes, advertisements - all beautifully outlined with illustrations and little notes scribbled here and there. These were her way of chronicling her times.

Of late, I have come across several articles recommending people to maintain journals - almost a lost art. Kannada author and activist Dr Nataraj Huliyar who has worked closely with stalwarts like D R Nagaraj and P Lankesh writes about his penchant for maintaining a journal that proved to be vastly useful in recording his interactions with his peers who changed the face of Kannada literature. Eminent author and linguist A K Ramanujan's journals compiled and published by his son, titled *Journeys,* gives readers a peek into his memories, interactions, his meticulous, massive academic studies and research through decades.

Why do we need to maintain journals - especially during these stressful times? I recall Giovanni Boccaccio's Italian classic *The Decameron* (1353), a set of hundred stories told by a group of seven women and three men who isolated themselves away from Florence, even as 'Black Death' consumes huge chunks of population. A journal of sorts, it is said to have inspired the likes of Chaucer and Shakespeare. It describes the epidemic thus: "And the plague gathered strength as it was transmitted from the sick to the healthy ... not only did the healthy incur the disease and with it the prevailing mortality by talking to or keeping company with the sick–they had only to touch the clothing or anything else that had come into contact with or been used by the sick and the plague evidently was passed to the one who handled those things."

Almost four centuries later, Daniel Defoe, known for his classic *Robinson Crusoe,* published *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) about London during the bubonic plague of 1665. It is said to be inspired from a journal by Defoe's uncle and contains accurate descriptions of London houses and streets, plague statistics and actual narratives of those who witnessed the grim scenes of the epidemic. At one point, the narrator says: "...that the infection was propagated insensibly, and by such persons as were not visibly infected, who neither knew whom they infected or who they were infected by."

It is said that keeping a journal can be therapeutic. Those who did, presented us with glimpses of the past that could not be erased.

Illustration
SOUMYADIP SINHA

Vyjayanthi Kashi

CROSSROADS AND CHOICES

In a series of webinars, Kuchipudi exponent Vyjayanthi Kashi explores the various leaps of faith people took to get to where they are today

EXPRESS FEATURES

The people whose achievements we admire didn't get to where they are in a day or two. Many of them found themselves at crossroads: they had to choose to either give up or take a leap of faith and pursue their passion. Such stories are the focus of Turning Point, a series of webinars hosted by Kuchipudi dancer Vyjayanthi Kashi. The show goes live on the Facebook and YouTube pages of Shambhavi School of Dance, every day at 8pm, and can be accessed there later.

> Right now, when there is so much negativity and panic around, I thought why not use this time to do what I had never done before
>
> – Vyjayanthi Kashi, dancer

Launched on May 11, the show has had guests like Padma Bhushan awardee Dr Kanak Rele, founder of Nalanda Dance Research Centre; Soorya Krishnamoorthy, founder of Soorya Stage and Film Society and Hindustani singer Bombay Jayashri.

An ardent lover of the stage, Kashi says it was the potential of digital platforms and the urge to take stories to people that prompted her to start the show.

"Last year we had so many online shows and performances that during this second wave it felt like a saturated idea. But today, when there is so much negativity and panic around, I thought why not use this time to do what I had never done before," says Kashi. Besides, she adds, people now have the time to just sit back and listen.

Usually the interviewee, Kashi now finds herself asking the questions. She wanted guests to be from different walks of life, with takeaways not just for the audience, but for her too.

She gives an example of Krishnamoorthy, who, as a scientist and engineer at the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) in 1972, got a chance to work with scientists like Bharat Ratna awardee APJ Abdul Kalam. But ultimately, he felt the field of art was his true calling.

"When he was a part of the Kerala Kala Samiti, he had tried to get a stipend of ₹3,000 for some of the artists, which was not from government funds but from different sources that he could tap into. It's a story for people to understand that if they really want to do something, there is always a way," says Kashi.

Kashi herself is often asked about the turning point in her own life. Turns out, it was a suggestion from her husband that altered her journey. "My husband belongs to the film community, which is a busy profession. Early in my marriage, I was naive and didn't understand the demands of his work. Since I was a trained dancer, he suggested I take my art seriously, which I did. And I am thankful to him for this advice," says Kashi.

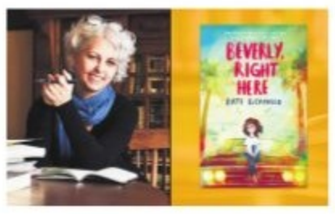
CITY READ

Startup launches virtual care platform

Healthcare startup KareXpert launches a virtual care platform to help hospitals in treating both Covid and non-Covid patients. The platform comes with audio/video consultations, EMR/EHR, diagnostics, pharmacy, and advanced BI. This is a SaaS-based platform helping hospitals offering comprehensive solutions to their patients at the comfort of their homes, virtually converting their homes into hospitals.

New online course for academics

An online course titled 'Writing and Disseminating Grey Literature' has been designed by the Digital Blended Learning, Word Lab and Media Lab teams at Indian Institute for Human Settlements. The course will be hosted on Coursera and aims to help researchers, academics and development sector professionals share their research work to a wider audience. Write to the course team at dbl_team@iihs.ac.in if you have any queries.



Online author interaction to be held

The Reading Challenge, an initiative curated by Neev Literature Festival for children aged between 10-13, is hosting an interaction with two-time Newbery Medal-winner author Kate diCamillo on her novel *Beverly, Right Here* on May 25 at 6.30pm. The book tells the story of 14-year-old Beverly Tapinski, who decides to take charge of her life. Uncared for by her parents, the teenager runs away from home when she loses her pet dog, Buddy. To register for the event, log onto neevliteraturefestival.org

TUNING IN
Bindu & Ambi Subramaniam

HIT PAUSE ON DIGITAL WORKPLACE BLUES

Swap playlists with other teams in your company

As we sink back into working online (some of us have stayed online for over a year), productivity is taking a hit. It's hard to be motivated, and it's hard to feel the sense of community we feel when we get to see our colleagues every day. Most companies and corporate workplaces have decided to keep work online for the foreseeable future, and some software companies have made the news lately for letting go of their offices altogether. Although working from home has the definite advantage of never having to wear pants, it's hard to stay focused and motivated to get work done.

In this situation, what can we do to keep community and morale up? How do we fill the gaps? Whether you manage people or are part of a team, there are ways you can help introduce music to make online work culture better for everyone.

1. Have a weekly music, dance or exercise session - Even online, shared experiences can help build community. Interacting in a less formal context can help make up for missed experiences like shared lunches and water cooler conversations.

2. Build a team playlist - Work together and find the music that defines your team. What's your Monday morning playlist to get you motivated? Your Friday afternoon playlist to welcome the weekend? Get members to contribute, and swap playlists with other teams in your company.

3. Find your musical community - If you work for a large company, find people who like the same music you do - share new releases, watch concerts online together, have musical game nights. Since you can't meet new people wandering the corridors of your workplace, connecting over common interests could be a great way to meet colleagues you don't work with everyday.

4. Organise a virtual concert - If you're missing live concert experiences, try a virtual one. Many artistes are performing special concerts tailored to their audiences, so try it out!

At the end of the work day, hopefully music has brought you some joy!

(The authors run SaPa - the Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts)

LOVEOLOGY
Mahesh Natarajan

Love in crisis

A still from the film *Titanic*

Do you remember the movie *Titanic?* If you are a millennial or a part of Gen-Z, you may not have heard of it but for most others, it was a movie of great significance, one that not only brought its chief actors into the limelight, but also rejuvenated the awe and mystery around the shipwreck that was the Titanic. Woven around an arranged marriage versus an impulsive and passionate romance, the highlight of the movie was more about the choices that people make when faced with the tragedy rather than the tragedy itself, and there were so many of them - how class privilege paid a part, but only up to a certain point, how power played its part only to turn into that one stricken moment where the ship's police officer shoots themselves in guilt and, most of all, how at the moment of crisis, a choice is made to live one's own life and not the one that was supposedly secure, albeit with a big emerald and some other things.

The Titanic is a metaphor for life that's just happily cruising along, snug and smug in its sense of safety and space, only to suddenly bump into a humongous iceberg in the middle of a cold, winter night. We often live like that, especially when we otherwise have no real issues with respect to health, wealth and happiness. We go about our life fully oblivious to what's happening and then, wham! We hit something that we didn't expect and everything gets upended.

Covid hit us something like that iceberg that Titanic met. There were enough warnings that we can clearly see in hindsight, but we went on ahead and here we are, in a crisis of a lifetime. As with the movie, is this crisis making us consider who we are, how we live, and what place love has in our lives?

Are you finding yourself suddenly glad for the company and support, even if just a year ago you were thinking this is dull and stilted? Are you finding yourself seeing this person you thought you loved, and wondering how come you never saw all these annoying things about them, and can't wait for lockdown to be lifted so you can get away? Are you thinking of the proposals that came your way that you declined thinking better will be on its way, and wishing you had said yes? Are you feeling the loneliness and wishing you hadn't waited to feel those mythical stirrings that everyone talks about, and just married the person your family introduced? Do you feel your heart palpitate in panic when you hear a certain someone is Covid positive, and you had not realised you might have feelings for that person?

The fear of death makes us feel how precious life is and at the moment of contact with that fear, there's a clarity that somehow eludes us at other times. Even with the Titanic, one thinks that post the tragedy, many survivors may have gone back to their old lives, leaving behind whatever clarity they found in the cold depths of the Atlantic.

What would life be like if we didn't need crises to get clarity?

(The author is a counsellor with InnerSight)

OPERATION RESURGENCE

With the Covid wave bringing the film industry to a grinding halt again, here are producers and directors from across regions sharing their plans and a roadmap for the way ahead

GOPINATH RAJENDRAN

With the nation suffering from a second iteration of the pandemic, everything has come to a standstill once again. The film industry is particularly affected, and if there's a word on the lips of every filmmaker and producer out there, it's 'uncertainty'. "It's all uncertain right now. Scientists are saying that the second wave could last till August and that a third wave could hit us in November," says Tamil producer Dhananjayan, who has postponed his plans of starting work on two films. "I had told others also to be careful about kick-starting new projects, and as I predicted, the cases have gone up again." He says that those who have completed shooting are able to make progress with post-production and potentially go on to sell to OTT platforms. "Those who haven't completed the shoot are in big trouble as a lot of money is at stake. A work-in-progress film has no value. Some, who were affected by the first wave, have been more cautious this time."

Nagraj Manjule

Tamil director Vishnuvardhan, who is making his debut in Bollywood with Sidharth Malhotra's *Shershaah* in November, agrees the futility of making decisions right now. "We are playing the waiting game. I believe everything depends on the capacity of a film's producers to hold on to their film. Those who can, will ride out the storm till theatres reopen," says the filmmaker, who goes on to detail the financial strain that many producers are subjected to right now. "Interest charges keep mounting. Producers are just happy to recover their principal investment by somehow selling their films. But we all understand that the times are bad and that we, like everyone else, must abide by the rules," he adds.

This seems to be the sentiment across the film industry. Telugu director Venu Udugala, whose film, *Virata Parvam*, is awaiting release, says, "It took three months for the film industry to limp back to normalcy after last year's lockdown. This second wave seems scarier, and I think it will take another three-four months for things to settle down again." Tamil producer SR Prabhu agrees that the challenge now is to ride out the pandemic. There's another lesson, he says. "Henceforth, we have to remember to work on both theatre and OTT releases together."

It's important in the present climate to prioritise the safety of the cast and crew members, says debutant director Cibi Chakaravarthi, who is working with Sivakarthikeyan on their upcoming film, *Don*. "Two of our staff members passed away due to the virus. This has affected all of us and we are only left with the hope that the situation improves soon. We will be keen on having every crew and cast member vaccinated before we work again. The production team has asked everyone to take leave for a month and stay safe with our families."

Marathi director Nagraj Manjule (*Sairat*), who is awaiting the release of his Bollywood debut, Jhund, is not thinking about film releases right now. "The country is in an extremely difficult situation. It would be selfish now to worry about my film. Having said that, all I can do is hope that things get back on track soon." Cibi, who has completed 40 per cent of his Tamil film, is praying for the same. "Right now, we have no idea when we will be getting back on the floors. Only after the lockdown gets over can we think about resuming work," says the young director. "We had planned to travel across several States for the remaining shooting, but now, I'm not sure what complications we should expect. The State governments may have several restrictions governing film shootings. We hope to begin work from the first week of June."

Dhananjayan

While this is the case with unfinished projects, what about the long list of films that await their release? Kannada producer and distributor, Manjunath Gowda, shares that the industry has devised a system that is beneficial for all the stakeholders. "Once the lockdown is over, we will be scheduling a gap of three weeks between the release of each major film. We have films like *Salaga*, *Kotigobba 3*, *Bhajarangi 2*, *KGF Chapter 2*, and *Vikrant Rona* set to release in this order, apart from the small films that will find their way to theatres. The dates are not fixed yet, as there is still some uncertainty over the situation."

Venu Udugula agrees that the Telugu releases should be planned methodically too. "We hope to get a release over a long holiday weekend so that a film can break even during its first weekend; if we figure this out early enough, we can avoid possible clashes with other films as well. This will also enable the distributors to block theatres in advance," says Venu.

SR Prabhu

Kannada actor-director-producer Ramesh Arvind is looking forward to the release of his next directorial, *100*, and also the commencement of shooting for his sequel of *Shivaji Surathkal*. He says, "Small and medium budget films will start rolling soon after the lockdown. Hopefully, by the time the shoot and post-production work gets over, the Covid vaccination drive will make progress too and make the whole process less risky. Big-budget films with too much at stake may choose to wait and watch." Many makers of big-budget films don't seem willing to go the OTT way. Malayalam producer Sukumar Thekkepat, who is bankrolling Nivin Pauly's *Thuramukham*, believes that an "epic like *Thuramukham* deserves to be seen on the big screen". For now, he is willing to wait. "After seeing how the situation plays out in two weeks, we will make a decision."

Ramesh Aravind

Manjunath Gowda

Vishnuvardhan

Telugu producer Koneru Satyanarayana, who is awaiting the release of Ravi Teja-starrer *Khiladi*, is also banking on the big screen experience. "We had planned to release *Khiladi* on May 28, until the sudden surge in cases made us postpone the release," he shares. "Our film was conceived for the theatres, and we are in no rush to announce a new release date." Vipin Kumar, a representative of Prithviraj Productions whose Malayalam film, *Kuruthi*, got postponed from its original May 13 release date, says, "We are discussing an alternative plan. We will be announcing it soon."

Sources state that makers of films like Mohanlal's *Marakkar*, Fahad Faasil's Malik and Dulquer Salmaan's *Kurup* are all keen on theatre releases as well. Director Vishnuvardhan deems the theatre experience essential for the health of all film industries. "Like Vijay's *Master* did in Tamil cinema, a star vehicle serves to bring audiences back to the theatres," he points out.

Producer SR Prabhu hopes that all the film industries will unite to help each other out during this difficult time. Dhananjayan agrees and hopes that normalcy can resume from at least July. "Films can start releasing in theatres from August then. Even if the 50 per cent occupancy rule is implemented, it would still be manageable. The cases in the North have come down in the last few days, and with the lockdown implemented in many States, we hope for things to get better."

(With inputs from A Sharadhaa, Murali Krishna CH and Sajin Shrijith)

'Don't judge a book by its cover'

Bigg Boss Kannada Season 8 contestant Divya Suresh talks about the lip-lock scene in her upcoming film, Rowdy Baby, which she says is a crucial part of the story

A SHARADHAA

Divya Suresh, who has hit the spotlight with Bigg Boss Kannada Season 8, has also been garnering attention for her upcoming film, Rowdy Baby. The makers recently released a lyrical song video from the film directed by Reddy Krishna, and since then, the hot topic of discussion has been her lip-lock scene with the lead actor, Ravi Gowda. Without mincing words, the actor says one should not judge the film with only that one sequence. "Don't judge a book by its cover, that's my take.

Viewers should not jump to conclusions about a film from just the teaser and trailer. They should watch the film to know why that particular scene was required," says Divya, adding, "Rowdy Baby is a love story with a college backdrop. Without revealing the content, I would say this particular lip-lock scene is a crucial sequence which takes the story forward."

Divya has worked in two Kannada films Third Class, and No.9, Hilton Road, and has also worked in a Telugu film, Busy Police, which did not grab the kind of notice she had thought it would. However, fortune favoured her when she got the fame she was looking for with the Bigg Boss show. "I am new to the industry, and this reality show has helped people understand who I am," says Divya.

The actor loves challenging roles and characters linger in the minds of audience. "I enjoy playing biopic roles and hope to bag one such subject," says Divya, who is happy with the kind of offers she has been receiving post Bigg Boss. "Talks are on for a couple of projects, which will probably see me paired opposite well-known artistes. I am waiting for the lockdown to be lifted to officially reveal details of one of the films that I will be part of," she signs off.

> Viewers should not jump to conclusions about a film from just the teaser, trailer and songs. They should watch the film to know why that particular scene was required
>
> Divya Suresh, actor

'I'm getting work in Telugu because of *Dia*'

Actor Dheekshith Shetty is awaiting the release of the trailer of his upcoming film, *Mugguru Monagallu*, which will see a bilingual release in Telugu and Kannada

A still from a film

CE FEATURES

Dheekshith Shetty, who found fame with his debut role in KS Ashoka's *Dia*, finds that it has helped make his mark in Tollywood. The actor, who has made his debut with his first Telugu film *The Rose Villa*, which is yet to see its release, has completed shooting for his second project as well.

Titled *Mugguru Monagallu*, the comedy suspense thriller, directed by Abhilash Reddy and produced by Achut Ramarao, will see a bilingual release. The film will be dubbed and released as *Aani Muthugalu* in Kannada. The makers, who have revealed the film's first look, will follow it with a trailer release today. "My second Telugu film is made under the same production house, Chitra Mandir Studios, with whom I worked on for *The Rose Villa*. We completed shooting for *Mugguru Monagallu* in the last half of 2020, and it is now in the post-production stage. The makers are in talks with a certain OTT platform for the release of these two films. However, there are possibilities of releasing *Mugguru Mongallu* on the big screen, provided the situation improves in Hyderabad and theatres are allowed to reopen," he says.

Dheekshith Shetty

Dheekshith, who rose to popularity with TV serial *Nagini*, gives all credit to his first silver screen debut, *Dia*."Whatever work I am getting in Telugu now is because of *Dia*. Good feedback about the film helped it reach a wide audience in different languages," he believes.

Dheekshith , who now wants to go with the flow, is fine with his films releasing on any platform- "*Dia* saw success in both theatres and on OTT platforms. As an artiste I want people to watch the film and for it to have a good reach. However, as a viewer who has watched films in theatre since childhood, I wish to see myself on the big screen. But the pandemic has changed the entire entertainment scenario," he says.

Apart from these two Telugu films, Dheekshith also has two Kannada projects - *KTM* and *Sheegrameva Kalyana Prapthirasthu* — which are currently on floors.